

Theater News

Ossie Davis Will Succeed Sidney Poitier in 'Raisin'

By Stuart W. Little

The first major cast substitution affecting Lorraine Hansberry's award-winning "A Raisin in the Sun" will be made tonight when Sidney Poitier leaves the play to work in a film and the actor Ossie Davis takes his place.

Mr. Davis has been stand-by for Poitier since April. But tonight will be his first time in the role of the ambitious Walter Lee Younger whose dreams as both son and father are blocked by the realities of life in a matriarchal Negro family in southside Chicago.

It is a difficult role, in Mr. Davis' estimation, and different from anything he has played before in an acting career which includes "Jeb," "The Wisteria Trees," "Green Pastures," "Anna Lucasta," "No Time for Sergeants" and "Jamaica."

"It is a role that has to be dug off the paper," he said, "because it doesn't slide off easily."

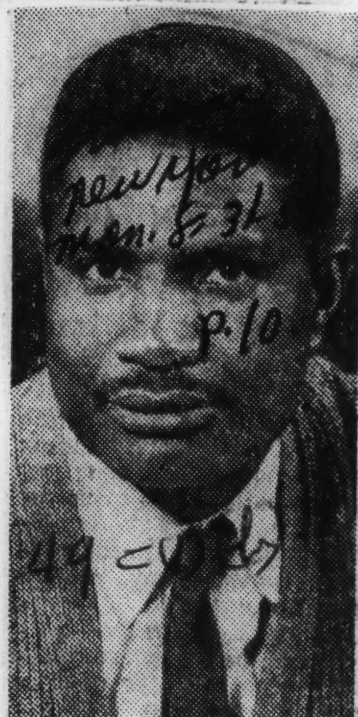
Going in during the run, furthermore, ("A Raisin" is 200 performances old tomorrow) has its special disadvantages, according to Mr. Davis, whose smiling optimism as an actor tends to downgrade the difficulties and whose thoughtfulness as a playwright, which he works at in his free time, tends to see the problem in the round.

Joining Cast Late

"Joining the cast late," said Mr. Davis, "means there is not the time to build the proper underpinning and understructure for the role."

In a larger framework, Mr. Davis as actor and writer is concerned to build the proper understructure for the Negro in American society. He spoke of his desire to explain the American Negro both to himself and to his white fellow citizens. Self-portraits like "A Raisin in the Sun" help.

Help for Mr. Davis' more immediate acting problems has come from his stage wife, who is also his wife in real life—the actress Ruby Dee. They will ap-



Ossie Davis, who will take over the Sidney Poitier role in "A Raisin in the Sun" tonight.

pear in the same play together tonight for the fourth time.

"And Ruby, I am afraid," said the now smiling Mr. Davis, "is losing more sleep over the transfer than I am."

Theatre: Harlem Bard

Works by Langston Hughes at de Lys

Hughes at de Lys

WHAT Pearl Shyre did for Sean O'Casey's autobiographies Robert Glenn now has done for Langston Hughes' poetry. By meticulous sifting and tying together he has succeeded in transforming work not actually intended for the theatre into a cohesively stirring dramatic portrait.

What is equally important, as director he has made that portrait come vividly and poignantly alive in "Shakespeare in Harlem." The work was presented yesterday at the Theatre de Lys as the first program in the series of matinees sponsored by the Greater New York Chapter of the American National Theatre and Academy.

The technique employed is, indeed, somewhat more flexible than that devised by Mr. Shyre for O'Casey. The performers at moments give the impression of a group painting come to life. At other moments, with the aid of sensitive lighting by George Dignam, they act out the poems as little vignettes.

No lecterns here, no scripts on the lecterns to suggest that what is happening is a reading. This is a shrewd and creative effort that should not be wasted. In its own way it is as effective a work by and about Negroes as we have had in the theatre in a long time.

The single theme running through "Shakespeare in Harlem," interestingly enough, is derived from the same piece of poetry that provided Lorraine Hansberry with the title for her hit, "A Raisin in the Sun." The theme is that of the "dream deferred" in Harlem and its consequences—the dreams, yearnings and quest for human dignity. There are also ample shafts of wit and fun. Mr. Hughes is not only a somber poet laureate for his people. In his point of view there is a mature sense of humor, as well.

Yet, basically, the pathos overrides. The thrusts of disillusionment are sure and piercing—the boy who wishes

to study French, knowing that he never will get to France; the housewife hoping for a new stove; the picture of the landlord who never fixes the things he promises



Alma Hubbard

The Cast

SHAKESPEARE IN HARLEM, preceded by "Soul Home." The former is an adaptation by Robert Glenn from Langston Hughes' poetry; the latter is a one-act play by Mr. Hughes. Both staged by Mr. Glenn; presented for one performance by the Greater New York Chapter of the American National Theatre and Academy's Matinee Series (Lucille Lortel, artistic director); stage manager, Tullio Garzonne. At the Theatre de Lys.

SOUL GONE HOME
The Mother.....Isabelle Sanford
The Son.....Frank Glass
Ambulance Attendants.....Louis Groubert
Claude Harz

SHAKESPEARE IN HARLEM
Narrator.....Jay Riley
Blues Man, Preacher.....John McCurry
Albert K. Johnson.....Alma Hubbard
Old Man.....Ted Butler
Young Man.....Carl Lee
Cat, Killer Boy.....Frank Glass
Sick Man, Bartender.....Godfrey Cambridge
Girl in Bar.....Isabelle Sanford
Chippie.....Doris Proctor
Musicians: Margaret Bonds, piano;
Calvin Fenton, drums; Jimmie Corbett, bass.

to fix yet never misses his rent collection. All this and more are wrapped up in this moving package.

No little praise should be given to those who play the various parts. Jay Riley is excellent as the narrator, while John McCurry, Alma Hubbard, Ted Butler, Carl Lee, Frank Glass, Godfrey Cambridge, Isabelle Sanford and Doris Proctor evoke each of their roles with skill.

Miss Sanford and Mr. Glass also are involved in the curtain raiser, "Soul Gone Home." This is a brief sketch by Mr. Hughes with a bitter taste, and none too consequential. But there is no doubt about the value of "Shakespeare in Harlem."

LEWIS FURKE.

'Porgy' gross near 2 million, opens new doors for race

Baltimore, Md.

NEW YORK — "Porgy and Bess," having grossed more than a \$1,500,000 to date in its six opening engagements, this week is heading for a two-million dollar figure with the additional engagements planned in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Detroit and Washington.

Following the four new openings, the Samuel Goldwyn production will increase its engagements to 22 by the Christmas holidays, adding Baltimore, Cleveland, Buffalo, Syracuse, Miami, Indianapolis, Louisville, Salt Lake City, Dallas, San Diego and Denver.

Currently, Columbia Pictures report, "Porgy and Bess" is in its 18th week in New York City, with engagements in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago and Toronto.

The overwhelming acceptance of the Goldwyn film at the box office has opened new vistas in Hollywood for colored stars. Its tremendous gross is proof of new drawing power on the silver screen.

Since the opening of "Porgy," its top stars, Dorothy Dandridge, Sidney Poitier, Sammy Davis Jr., and Pearl Bailey have made great strides in the film world. In fact, "Porgy" has done for the colored screen star in Hollywood and throughout the entertainment world, an undeniable good. Contrary to the belief of some "do-gooders," the Samuel Goldwyn screen version of the Gershwin's world renowned opus could well be the Emancipation Proclamation of the colored artist in quest of equality in Hollywood.

'Raisin' moves to new house

Baltimore, Md.

NEW YORK — After almost a year on Broadway, "A Raisin in the Sun" will finally move into the Belasco Theatre, the house for which it was originally intended, when co-produced by Phil Rose and David Cogan. The first produced play from the pen of Lorraine Hansberry. Much success has passed under "Raisin's" marquee, since its opening at the Barrymore Theatre last March.

Winner of the Drama Critics' Award as the "Best American Play of the Year," the 99 percent all colored drama has already been sold to Hollywood and has established an enviable box office record on Broadway. It has paid back its original \$100,000 investment several times.

THE ONE CHANGE in the cast, from Sidney Poitier to Ossie Davis, has caused no ill effects while bringing to the big street, for the first time in many seasons, an off as well as on stage husband and wife team in the person of Davis and Ruby Dee.

The move to the Belasco Theatre on West 44th Street, will afford the production a larger number of moderate priced seats and will benefit those who have been denied an opportunity to see it due to its hit rating. In more than thirty weeks on the great white way, the play has attracted upwards to a million and a quarter dollars in customers. One of the most startling successes to hit the big street, it was also sold to Hollywood for \$300,000.



DANCER OF THE YEAR—

Maudelle, creative dancer whose specialty is Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, Egyptian, and Mexican dances, and whose original and individual power of creation and expression has gained her global renown, has been named the female terpsichorean of the year. The star, who was recently seen in recital at both Carnegie and Carl Fischer Concert Hall in New York, was feted by friends at Suite Ancon. Maudelle is scheduled for a heavy concert tour on college campuses and the stage this fall.

Jane White Fulfills One Of Her Father's Great Hopes



HER MAJESTY Jane White, daughter of the late Walter White, portrays a queen in the Broadway musical hit, "Once Upon a Mattress."

The late Walter White went with Wendell Wilkie in the early forties to Hollywood to fight Negro-type casting in the movies. His daughter, Jane White, disclosed after a recent performance of the Broadway musical hit, "Once Upon a Mattress."

Proof of how this far-sighted ambition of the late Negro leader has materialized, was the excellence of casting and ability of his daughter, in one of Broadway's most refreshing and original new productions.

Playing the part of the queen in the classical fairy tale of a princess whose royal blood is tested by placing a pillow on 20 mattresses, Miss White acts, sings and dances in assuming the motivating role for the comic situation that weaves an amusing evening of entertainment.

BORN IN New York City and educated at Smith College, and the Ethical Culture School in Northampton, Mass., Miss White feels that The Actors Equity has done much to improve roles for the Negro in all media of entertainment.

The actress has also been active in programs to improve race casting, among which were the "Torchlight Showcase" for better roles in radio.

The versatile thespian, who was a former drama instructor at Skidmore College and also teacher of acting in New York, says that "Once Upon a Mattress" is her most successful Broadway show and one of her best roles.

TRANSFERRED to the Alvin Theatre Thanksgiving eve for its 216th performance, "Mattress" also includes TV star Joe Bova as young "Prince Dauntless" and TV star Carol Burnett as "Princess Winnifred."

Miss White does not claim that the fight for better roles in entertainment is over, but rather, "It is a constant battle with a goal not yet reached."

Her performance in the play, however, establishes a real claim for the fulfillment of her ambition to play Shakespeare's "Cleopatra" opposite Sir Lawrence Olivier. The stately beauty feels that anyone hoping to make a career of show business must be prepared to make many sacrifices, obtain extensive training, and be willing to dedicate his whole

heart to his work, realizing that it is not all "champagne and roses."

Among other Broadway successes in which Miss White has appeared are "The Insect Comedy," "The Climate of Eden," "Strange Fruit," "Jane Eyre" and "The Power and the Glory."

Of her late father Walter White's many battles for the Negro, the young actress feels the most important and impressive were his struggles to have a Federal anti-lynch law and an FEPC law enacted. — HOWARD L. JACKSON for ANA

Two First Plays Open This Week

By JUDITH CRIST

Two first plays will come to Broadway this week, with Peter Shaffer's London hit, "Five Finger Exercise," opening at the Music Box Wednesday and Lonnie Coleman's "Jolly's Progress" due at the Longacre on Saturday.

Mr. Coleman's credits include seven novels, among them the most recent "Sam," and one other play that died en route to Broadway but flourished on screen as the critically acclaimed "Hot Spell." For his second Broadway venture the Southern writer turned to one of his own novels, "Adam's Way," described by critics as "Pygmalion with a Southern setting." The Galatea is a sixteen-year-old Negro girl named Jolly, a semi-literate runaway servant taken under the tutorial wing of an erudite white man, living as a semi-recluse in a small Southern town.

With Wendell Corey her co-star as the Pygmalion, Eartha plays the Galatea. "Your Jolly" "New Faces of 1952," and be- is the same girl I call Eartha," came a top film, nightclub and she told Mr. Coleman when they television personality. She made met on the first day of rehearsal, her dramatic debut here in In many ways, she notes, "Jolly's 1954 as a fifteen-year-old in Progress" parallels hers during "Mrs. Patterson," and was last her early years in South Caro- on Broadway in "Shinbone Al- lina, recalling her loveless pov- ley" as mehitabel, the toujours erty-stricken Southern child- gaie don marquis cat.

Mr. Corey, recruited for his But no protective Pygmalion role from Hollywood where or cultured tutor came her major films and television series are occupying him, has way, the actress points out, re- counting how she was brought more than a score of Broadway to Harlem at the age of eight plays to his credit, among them by an aunt and given a brief "Dream Girl" and, most re- taste of school before going to cently, "The Night of the Auk," work in a factory. She began it 1955. "Five Finger Exercise," deemed the best play by a new playwright during the 1958-'59 season by London critics, is also a first for Peter Shaffer, whose previous plays have been pro-

duced not on stage but on television and radio in England.

The thirty-three-year-old playwright is, however, the only theatrical novice in the enterprise. Sir John Gielgud, who staged the play in London, is directing it here, his first staging of a contemporary play in this country where he has directed to date only "Medea" and his season's "Much Ado About Nothing."

Four members of the original five-actor cast are here for this production, with the fifth role taken by Jessica Tandy. The English-born Broadway actress is co-starred with Roland Culver, a top West End actor and British film star. Miss Tandy, incidentally, made her stage debut with Mr. Culver when she appeared in England at nineteen in "The Manderson Girls," and ten years later shared honors with him in one of his major successes, Terence Rattigan's "French Without Tears."

Michael Bryant, Brian Bedford and Juliet Mills complete the cast in the comedy-drama of British suburban family life, involving the inter-relationship of parents, adolescent son and young daughter and the impact upon their household of a young German expatriate engaged as a tutor for the daughter. The play, Mr. Shaffer explains, was written "to be interpreted by five equally important acting instruments, like a string quintet."

'Raisin' Stars Honored

Claudia McNeil Pitches for NAACP

NEW YORK — At a special party to honor the top cast members of the Broadway hit, "A Raisin in the Sun," Claudia McNeil, the play's central character, got on a well-aimed pitch for the NAACP's annual \$100-a-couple dinner which will be held next month.

Honored along with Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, who share star billing with her, Miss McNeil asked that all civic, social and fraternal clubs come to the aid of the fighting organization. Said she, "This year the NAACP celebrates its 50th birthday. It has been, I believe, a glorious, dramatic and meaningful half-century of life, but one which cannot be considered ended. The final chapter has yet to be written."

"There are children still to be sent to adequate, well-staffed, integrated schools. There are those still denied decent housing because they are the wrong color or are of the wrong religion. There are those who are yet to enjoy the greatest of the constitutional rights—the right to become part of that government for the people, made up by the people allowed to vote."

"The NAACP still has much to do in this struggle for human freedom and human dignity. This fight cannot continue, this fight cannot be won unless you join the ranks. So be among those counted Dec. 6 when the roll is called at the Freedom Dinner. Honored will be the immortal Marian Anderson and Gardner Cowles, publisher of Look magazine." Miss McNeil was followed on the stage of the Belmont Plaza by Jackie Robinson, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee who joined in urging full attendance for the up-coming Freedom Dinner.—IZZY ROWE



JOLLY'S PROGRESS—Wendell Corey as teacher and Eartha Kitt as pupil in modern Pygmalion theme dramatized by Lonnie Coleman from his own novel

Week's Plays

Wednesday Night

FIVE FINGER EXERCISE

A new play by Peter Shaffer at the Music Box, presented by Frederick Brisson and the Playwrights' Company. Jessica Tandy, Roland Culver, Michael Bryant and Juliet Mills head the cast. Directed by John Gielgud.

Thursday Night

SILENT NIGHT, LONELY NIGHT

A new play by Robert Anderson at the Morosco Theater, presented by the Playwrights' Company. Henry

Saturday Night

JOLLY'S PROGRESS

A new play by Lonnie Coleman at the Longacre Theater, presented by the Theater Guild and Arthur Loew. Eartha Kitt and Wendell Corey head the cast. Directed by Alex Segal.



Werner J. Kuhn

"JOLLY'S PROGRESS"—Eartha Kitt plays an Alabama servant girl who becomes educated in Lonnie Coleman's play, opening at the Longacre Theatre on Saturday.



Sportin' Life

The Miami Herald

THAT'S BOTH the name and avocation of
Sammy Davis Jr. in Sam Goldwyn's \$7,000,000
"Sportin' Life" and Bessie. The George Gershwin folk
opera about life in Charleston's Catfish Row,

above, will have its local premiere at the
Sheridan Theater on Thursday night as a
benefit for the Lend-A-Hand Fund before em-
barking on a roadshow run.

Theatre: A Negro Family

The Ballad of Jazz Street

Told in 'Village' New York
By LOUIS CALTA

All comparison is inescapable: Norton Cooper's play, "The Ballad of Jazz Street," which had its premiere Wednesday at the Greenwich Mews Theatre on Thirteenth Street, bears a resemblance, thematic and otherwise, to Lorraine Hansberry's hit drama, "A Raisin in the Sun." That is, it deals with a Negro family from Georgia who attempts to break out of an all-pervading poverty. In Hansberry's piece, which is set in Chicago, there is a strong-minded mother who struggles to keep her brood from flying to pieces. In Mr. Cooper's drama, there also is a resolute mother determined to find some true meaning in life. Also, both "The Ballad of Jazz Street" and "A Raisin in the Sun" are initial play-making efforts.

But this is where the similarities end. "The Ballad of Jazz Street" is a rather crude play, lacking vigor and verve. If Mr. Cooper achieves some of theatrical effectiveness, it is through the musical interludes with which the play is interlaced. For the background of "The Ballad of Jazz Street" is some-thing in Harlem, we assume, a grubby-looking night called the Live a Little Club, where some musicians play. When the play begins, Hank Brown, a farmer who can't even grow dirt in Georgia, arrives with his wife, Jessie, and daughter, Belle, to improve their lot. They are going to work hard and send Belle to college. Belle has aspirations of becoming a lawyer and is going to find himself a good-paying job. But in no time at all the Big City works out its influences.

Belle becomes involved with a smooth-talking clarinetist who seduces her from her dreams. Hank falls for a series of tricks of a gambling de-

vice. Throughout it all, the mother suffers heroically, certain that "out of this confusion" her family "will find the right way." It is all rather sudsy. But there are some honest, and at times, moving performances by a cast of eight players. Avon Long, who will be remembered for his portrayal of Sportin' Life in the Broad-



Avon Long

The Cast

THE BALLAD OF JAZZ STREET, a play by Norton Cooper, with music by Nat Pierce. Staged by Adrian Hall; presented by Stella Holt; scenery by Jack H. Cornwell; costumes by Bill Hargate; lighting by Gerald Peil; associate producer, Frances Drucker; production manager, Andrew Mihok; stage manager, Ray Brown. At the Greenwich Mews Theatre, 141 West Thirteenth Street.

Hank Brown	Richard Ward
Belle Brown	Tina Sattin
Jessie Brown	Helen Martin
Lucky	Avon Long
Paul Higgins	Juan Kee
Swing Jones	Lonnie Sattin
Old Ben	Edward Russell
Bartender	Roy Adams
Preacher	

way production of "Porgy and Bess," plays Lucky, the con man, with lightness of foot and manner. He appears to be confined by Mr. Cooper's rather small play. Although Tina Sattin is making her New York stage debut in the play, she is expertly convincing as the ingenuous and inexperienced girl from the farm. Her husband, Lonnie Sattin, whom theatregoers may recall as the

prizefighter in "Body Beautiful" some seasons ago, is excellent as the shiftless musician who succeeds in making her forget her fine resolves. Richard Ward brings a note of humor to the role of the father who eventually longs "to see just five feet of open space with nothing moving in it."

Although Adrian Hall's direction is fluid, it is of no assistance to a drama of limited worth. Jack Cornwell deserves credit for capturing in a single setting the tawdriness of a night spot, the glaring neon-light effects of a dismal street and the cheapness of a grubby room the Browns call home.

Off Broadway

'The Ballad of Jazz Street' Opens at Greenwich Mews

"The Ballad of Jazz Street," a new play by Norton Cooper in three acts and eight scenes, directed by Adrian Hall, setting by Jack Cornwell, presented by Stella Holt at the Greenwich Mews Theatre, 141 W. 13th St., with the following cast:

Hank	Richard Ward
Belle	Tina Sattin
Jessie	Helen Martin
Lucky	Avon Long
Ben	Strawberry Russell
Swing	Lonnie Sattin
Paul	William Kee
Bartender	Roy Adams
Reverend	Roy Adams

By Water Kerr

THE BROWNS are a very sweet family bedeviled by music, and I wish them many a peaceful night when no clarinet cries and no barroom piano rolls.

The play in which they appear, "The Ballad of Jazz Street," is bedeviled by music, too, and in a very curious way. As playwright Norton Cooper tells his extremely simple story of some Negro farm people whose lives are torn up by the big-city sounds that suddenly surround them, he wraps a wistful and tantalizing Nat Pierce score around the lonely vigils in upstairs rooms, he invites grasshopper Avon Long to let his dancing legs live a little, and he lets singer Lonnie Sattin whisper an unaccompanied lyric to a vulnerable girl in an after-hour cabaret.

Since designer Jack H. Corn-

well has packaged all of these sad little vignettes and these seductive sounds in an open frame of blinking lights and bright pin-ball colors, we are teased by the feel of a musical show. But we are never really tumbled into a musical show. Mr. Long shakes his itching ankles in nimble orchestration, then stops in the middle of a numbers game he is running. Mr. Sattin builds his quiet songs



Avon Long in "The Ballad of Jazz Street."

to what begins to sound like a full-throated declaration, then catches his breath to talk about midnight hideaways.

Tina Sattin, as the shy little bookworm who acquires a taste for chartreuse slippers and the honky-tonk beat pounded out by a man in smoked glasses, supplies some strangely interesting off-notes for a plaintive fragment called "Jazz Street Blues." But fragment it is, as the evening goes. Miss Sattin must spend most of her time discovering what all of us know: that good little girls must never trust clarinet players, and that love on the wing isn't worth it. The familiar crises slow the lady down; and though she is a fetching creature at all times, I must confess that, like her mother, I admired her most in pigtailed.

What happens at the Greenwich Mews, after not too long a time, is that we come to insist upon more music and less play, or more play and less temptation. The tug toward everything tuneful is distracting; and the play that is left is not full-bodied enough.

Author Cooper writes felicitous lines now and then. When farmer Richard Ward shakes his head to get the noises out of it and yearns "for five feet of open space with nothin' movin' in it," his plight is clear and appealing. When mother Helen Martin scoffs at the memory of a piece of land they "couldn't even grow dirt on," the laughter is quick.

But the scenes move too slowly, as though they were waiting for a downbeat. Too many spoken phrases suggest conventional lyrics without tune to support them (We've had our love" and "We still have dreams" come at you pretty often). And Mr. Cooper makes the odd mistake of underestimating his audience: after one exceptionally effective visual nightmare in which drunken revelers and passionate lovers carouse to music while a mother moans out her despair, the lights are permitted to fade and then rise again so that the mother can inform us, soberly, "I've been dreaming." A lively act-curtain has been flattened out.

Mr. Cooper wants a little

Eartha Kitt, a Brooding Girl, Also Can Be a Laughing One

By HARRY MacARTHUR
Star Staff Writer

Eartha Kitt was having a pedicure in her suite at the Statler-Hilton. She also was giving deep thought to a problem—the choice between two shades of nail polish. That disposed of, she offered an explanation. "I don't feel clean all over," she declared, "unless I have my feet done at the same time as my hands."

There didn't seem to be any answer to that. If Marilyn Monroe likes to feel blond all over, Eartha Kitt certainly has every right to feel clean all over.

Miss Kitt, who seethes—or at least seems to seethe—with an inner tumult, is a mercurial type. Moods flash across her expressive face. She retreats at times behind a mask that is sombre and brooding. It is an expression that seems to warn of impending explosion.

It disappears in a flash, however, if Miss Kitt is prompted to reminiscence. Her laugh over things remembered comes as quickly as the brooding sultriness—and is a complete antidote for it.

The other day, for instance, she suddenly recalled her first visit to Turkey—and her last one. It was in or about 1951, when she was beginning a cabaret singing career in Europe after five years as a Kathryn Dunham dancer. She persuaded her agent at the time that she didn't need him as an escort to Istanbul, no matter what the native customs were about women. She got a bodyguard anyhow when she arrived there, one that stayed with her whenever she left her hotel.

Turkey turned out to be an unsettling experience all around. On her first night she almost fled the country in tears.

It's Like Applause

"I went out to sing," Miss Kitt recalls, "and everybody started to talk. The louder I sang, the louder they talked. Finally I ran off the stage and told the manager to pay me for one show or not pay me at all, but just tell me when the next plane left for Paris. He thought I was crazy. 'They hate me,' I told him. 'They won't even listen to me. They just talk and talk.' 'Oh,' he said, 'That. When they talk that means they like you. If they didn't talk you'd be in real trouble. Now get back out there and sing before they tear the place apart.'"

Reassured, Miss Kitt got along fine for awhile. Then came the day when her bodyguards showed up at 8 in the morning.

"They told me," says the singer, "that I was being sued by the Turkish government. They took me down to court—it was just like a court anywhere except that everything was in Turkish. I didn't have the slightest idea what the judge was saying to me or even what I was supposed to be guilty of."

It turned out that Miss Kitt didn't have a permit to enter the country. One was arranged and all was serene again for awhile. Then came the day when a messenger delivered a package to her and departed without a word.

"I opened it," she remembers, "and it was full of jewelry. I didn't know who had sent it and naturally I thought it was just cheap costume jewelry. I wore a couple of pieces to the club that night and didn't think anything of it when the owner gave me the raised eyebrow."

"It was only when I was ready to leave," says Miss Kitt, "that I discovered it was real. It had been sent by some Turkish prince and,

in Turkey, if you accept a gift like that, you can't leave the country. I had to give it all back and there I was before that same judge again. He just couldn't figure out why I was so anxious to get a piece of paper letting me leave the country when I had had so much trouble getting a piece of paper that would let me in the country."

Started on a Dare

Miss Kitt, in town to headline the Howard Theater stage show, where she will be through next Wednesday, got into show business on a dare, she reveals. A friend dared her to attend auditions being conducted by Kathryn Dunham. She did and won a full scholarship. She was with the troupe—"I sang, danced, played the drums and acted as interpreter"—for five years, until departing in 1950 in Paris.

"They had to hire three people to replace me," she says gleefully. "A singer, a dancer and a drummer."

After that came singing dates in Paris and Turkey and then Orson Welles came along. Miss Kitt became a legitimate actress, appearing in Europe in the Welles written - directed - acted "Faust."

Mr. Welles and "Faust" were followed by some French made motion pictures. Then came the back-home phase of the Kitt career in the United States, where she was met at the boat by an interpreter. Having been born in South Carolina, reared in New York and by now having mastered several languages, she thinks this is pretty funny.

The next phase of Miss Kitt's career will be on stage in the employ of the Theater Guild, as a dramatic, non-singing actress. She is to appear with Franchot Tone in "Jolly's Progress," which goes into rehearsal late in September. How long this

will hold the mercurial Miss Kitt is anybody's guess. Asked if she had a run-of-play contract, she smiled slyly and said:

"Yes... but that only holds or one season."

BELAFONTE TURNS DREAM TO REALITY

Concern Over State of Stage

Leads Him Into Producing
—Julie Haydon to Tour

By TOMAS CALTA

Harry Belafonte's long-felt concern over the dearth of imagination in the legitimate theatre field is primarily responsible for his becoming a Broadway producer this season.

Confirming yesterday that he was all set to co-sponsor with Leo Kerz and George Justin the Marcel Aymé comedy "Moonbirds," Mr. Belafonte said that he had become involved in the project while shooting the film "Odds Against Tomorrow."

He was having a talk on the theatre with Mr. Kerz, who at the time was serving as art designer for the film, when the latter lent a sympathetic ear to Mr. Belafonte's theatrical contentions. Mr. Kerz suggested that the actor-singer read the script of "Moonbirds," and a partnership was born. Not only did Mr. Belafonte approve of the script but he also stipulated that he have first call on all other Kerz-Justin stage properties.

"Moonbirds," says Mr. Belafonte, "is the kind of thing that reflects the type of imagination that our theatre could really stand to see. I feel that it has tremendous merit. It is very light, but with a serious point to make."

Mr. Belafonte contends that one of the major weaknesses of Broadway today is the "prohibitive production costs." "They have stifled and suppressed the creative forces," he added. Because of the large investments needed to mount a show, he explained, producers more often than not are inclined to shun work of artistic merit for the possible "commercial success."

"Moonbirds" deals with a young faculty member who possesses the power to turn people into birds. He does this whenever he sees them in trouble or in pain. But his gesture, which

is fundamentally a humanitarian one, eventually gets him into difficulties with the authorities. The attraction is scheduled to open in New York at the Cort Theatre on Oct. 7, with Wally Cox in the central role.

Mr. Belafonte says he plans to continue in the Broadway managerial field. He also is searching for a musical vehicle.

3 Belafontes reported *from Baltimore, Md.* 'seeing our psychiatrist'

10-9-59.

LONDON — Henry Fielding, one of the leading columnists in British entertainment circles, reported last week that Harry Belafonte has disclosed that he and two members of his family are "seeing our psychiatrist every day."

The Fielding revelation in the London Daily Herald follows:

Harry Belafonte relaxed in a saffron-colored armchair and flashed a wry smile.

"It's true," he said. "I visit a psychiatrist EVERY DAY. I've been seeing him now for, oh, about two years, I guess."

I was surprised. But a bigger shock was to come.

For the singer's 15-year-old daughter Adrienne and beautiful second wife Julie also see a psychiatrist—"and if my two-year-old son David needs to see one when he's older, well, he'll

"IN FACT," summed up Harry. "I think everyone needs to see a psychiatrist at some time in his life."

Maybe. But why Harry? At 32 he is after all at the top of the show business ladder—rich, successful, adored.

"AND THAT," he said ruefully, "is just the trouble. Success brings its own troubles. I need to rid myself of certain attitudes produced in my formative years."

"Success has come very rapidly. And it's hard to bridge the gap between rejection and..."

Idolatry?

"You could call it that. I think I have my feet on the ground—and I want to keep them there. And I'm determined that my children shan't be infected by the kind of life I have to lead. I want them to relate themselves to the real world and not to the phoney one."

HARRY, his wife and I had this revealing talk in his 50gns. a day suite at the Mayfair Hotel just a few hours after he arrived from New York to do live and filmed TV shows for the BBC.

His son lay asleep in a curtained bedroom as, to the clink of ice in glasses and the murmur of folk music on the hi-fi,

Harry talked of the difficulty in being a colored man in a white world.

"Your Mr. Justice Salmon handed down a wonderful judgment after the Notting Hill troubles," said Harry. "I have it framed on my wall at home."

"WE STILL have a long way to go in the United States to catch up with Britain in racial attitudes."

"And when I was here last year," said Harry, "I walked through some of those troubled areas. I could see that something was coming."

"I don't like to think what it does to children's minds. Now you know one of the reasons why I see a psychiatrist..."

Pictures, Plays and Players

Eartha's Happy New York About Lucasta

By WILLIAM PEPPER

Eartha Kitt is noted for a grant you, but it's no step kind of subtle ferocity when forward." Miss Kitt said she is interested in a stage adaptation of Thornton Wilder's novel, "The Ides of March," now being prepared, in which she would play Cleopatra and Lloyd Nolan would play Caesar. That, however, wouldn't come along until next season, if it materializes at all.

For instance, in her suite at the Waldorf Towers the other day, before even saying hello, Miss Kitt hissed, "I'm in a terrible mood, so if you ask me any stupid questions, you'll get stupid answers."

Hunched on the couch like a cornered jaguar, the singing actress continued in her un-nervingly frank vein.

Asked about the importance to Negroes of two new movies, "Anna Lucasta," in which she stars, and "Porgy and Bess," in which she does not appear, she said, "I think 'Anna Lucasta' is an important step forward for us. But 'Porgy and Bess' will be a step backward."

"You see, 'Anna Lucasta' has nothing to do with race problems. It's just about ordinary, decent people with a domestic problem." (Anna herself happens to be a prostitute, but the rest of the cast are respectable middle class.) "That's important to us."

"Now, it's taken us about 90 years to prove that we've come down out of the trees, and then they make a movie like 'Porgy and Bess' and we're back where we started. 'Porgy' is about ignorant, squalid people you wouldn't want to associate with. That's why I think it's a step backward for us in spite of all that music."

Was it true that she was interested in appearing in "Jamaica?"

"Not any more," she said. "I finally saw the show and it's full of half-naked, wriggling natives. That can be exciting,



Sidney Poitier, who will star in "A Raisin in the Sun," which is opening in New Haven tonight.

MOVIE OPTIMIST

Dore Schary Fits a Happy End on a Down-Beat 'Lonelyhearts'

THE pure and good and honest people who make beautiful films in Hollywood cannot seem to get it through their noggin that there are other sorts of people in this world. They persist in the fine and cheering notion that there is no scoundrel so evil and corrupt that a bright gleam of brave and noble action will not turn his cold heart to quivering mush. They are the rearward of idealism, the invincible optimists. Maybe their ranks are thinning, but there are still a few of them left.

Apparently one is Dore Schary, who, despite a considerable load of Hollywood woe, refuses to be knocked down by the notion that some men are irredeemable rogues and that there are certain manifestations of deterioration that simply cannot be stopped. The most recent show of his conviction is his latest film, "Lonelyhearts," which he has made at his first independent picture since leaving the top job at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

This film, produced by Mr. Schary, with Vincent J. Donehue, who directed his stage play, "Sunrise at Campobello," doing the directing (his first for the screen), is based on a sharp and slashing novel, "Miss Lonelyhearts," by Nathaniel West, and a somewhat less sharp play version of it, done by Howard Teichmann two years ago. And anyone who ever read the novel or happened to see the play is well aware that there is not much optimism in that material.

Rat Poison

Indeed, "Miss Lonelyhearts" is nigh a classic in the literary rat-poison school and its principal characters are virtually models of deterioration from incurable disease. One is a news-

paper editor who is so full of cynicism and sheer satanic bile that he spreads a miasma of corruption over everything and everybody he comes near. The other is a young newspaper writer, an idealist at the start, who is assigned by this sadistic editor to write a column of "lonelyheart" advice. In performing this anguished job, however, and under the editor's ruthless sway, he loses his nerves, is disillusioned and slowly disintegrates. In the end, he is slain by one of the people he has pitifully tried to aid—which only goes to show that life is senseless and there ain't no good in men.

But this is not Mr. Schary's thesis in this stoutly sincere and forthright film, which he himself has written and which is now at the Victoria. The editor is a cynic and the writer an idealist at the start, and they both seem to grow more disillusioned and distraught as the pictures goes along. The writer discovers his own frailty when he helplessly succumbs to the importuning of one of his readers, a married woman, who is hungering for love. And this throws him into a tizzy of self-recrimination and despair.

Dramatist's Wand

Although the attack is less vicious than that of Mr. West up to here, the concept of two frustrated moderns becoming more and more corrupted is much the same. Then Mr. Schary takes over and, with a wave of his dramatist's wand, he arranges that all is not hopeless in Mr. West's world of lost souls. He has the young writer show bravery and humility in the face of a threat against his life by the husband of the woman with whom he has grossly erred. This not only purges him so neatly that he is able to go off with his fiancée, but it makes the cynical editor take flowers to his brutalized wife. The thesis is that anybody can cure

an incurable disease.

With due respect for Mr. Schary's idealism and optimism in this sad world, his wrap-up of this situation is naively and incredibly pat. Assuming the initial authenticity of the ills of his characters—and certainly these are evidenced most impressively by Robert Ryan and Montgomery Clift—it is beyond all reason and experience to imagine they could be cured by a melodramatic business of standing up to a man with gun.

The absurdity is all the more distressing because Mr. Schary has put into this film a great deal of forceful picture-making and it is played by an excellent cast. Mr. Ryan is superbly diabolic in a smirking, insinuating way and Mr. Clift runs a coruscating gamut of twitching agonies. Myrna Loy gives a poignant presentation of the editor's humiliated wife and Maureen Stapleton makes a harrowing creature of a wretched, love-starved dame.

Maybe a ruthless extension of this drama to its logical end might not have been pretty or ennobling, but it would have been shattering and true. Why else should one tell such a story? The facts of life are known outside Hollywood.



"A RAISIN IN THE SUN"—Claudia McNeil, as a troubled mother, and Sidney Poitier, in the part of her son, in Lorraine Hansberry's play about a Chicago Negro family with social aspirations. At the Barrymore on Wednesday.

Theater

Ethel Waters Returns With Program of Songs

By FRANK ASTON.

Honors divided just about 50-50 last evening at the Reginald, 144 Bleecker St. The program read: "An Evening With Ethel Waters." And there she was in one dress after another, mopping her face with a powder puff, joking about her size and "these rusty old pipes," calling her eager audience "my darlings" and "Franky," acknowledging her debt to the other half of the troupe.

He was her accompanist, Reginald Beane, who let it be known at once that he has a profound instinct for the piano and knows precisely how to sell his artistry. There were times, it must truthfully be reported, when the famous voice was in need of sturdy escort, and at these small crises, Mr. Beane's 10 stanch digits raced in and invariably sustained the mood of delight. His playing guaranteed that this show is a thing of sheer joy.

Began in 1917.

As she herself remarked,



ETHEL WATERS... in "An Evening With Ethel Waters."

Ethel Waters now is known to three generations. She made her first try at entertaining in public in 1917. Over the succeeding years she has grown

as a singer, comic and actress. Once a chambermaid, she now ranks as a great woman of the entertainment world.

Most of her current bill is devoted to songs. She approaches them casually and with every indication of prodigious good will. She is not presuming into the field of great singing, but is content to boil up now and then those famous low tones, to talk soothingly through the middle notes and to fall smoothly to half voice when the quavers mix with the higher reaches. She is superbly expert.

Moments of Jollity.

She has moments of jollity: acting as a paw-weary dance hall hostess, spoofing the lady of broad A and narrow virtue. She is sad with "Supper time" and a group of spirituals. But for the most part she is proving herself all over again in such notables as "Am I Blue," "Dinah," and "St. Louis Blues."

She and Mr. Beane do several duets. Their "Lady Be Good" had most listeners stomping almost noisily. The two of them, in their intimate and informal way, give off Broadway a novelty that is genuinely human and rhythmically enchanting.



A RAISIN IN THE SUN—Sidney Poitier and Claudia McNeil in leading roles of new play by Lorraine Hansberry, opening on Wednesday.

It is only justice for the thirty-year-old actor who started out on Broadway but achieved stature by way of television and film performances. Born in Miami, reared there and in the Bahamas, arriving in New York at fifteen without family or friends here, he finally answered an actor's wanted ad of the American Negro Theater to escape the dullness of the menial jobs he found. Twice rejected and finally accepted as a student in exchange for janitorial services, he caught the eye of a visiting director. This led to "Lysistrata" on

Broadway, which lasted for four performances but brought him praise in the role of a "nervous naive soldier," a portrayal aided, he notes, by stage fright. He did a brief stint in an unsuccessful production of "Freight" and for two years played a variety of roles in "Anna Lucasta" during its long tenure on Broadway and on tour.

This led to Hollywood and put "No Way Out," "Cry the Beloved Country," "Red Ball Express," "Go, Man, Go" and "Blackboard Jungle" on his list

of screen credits. It was his television role in "A Man Is Ten Feet Tall" that put him in the movie big-time, however, with the film version thereof, "Edge of the City." "Something of Value," "Mark of the Hawk," "The Defiant Ones" and, most recently, "Porgy and Bess" following.

For "The Defiant Ones" Mr. Poitier was entered in the Academy Award race, making a mark, some statisticians report, as the first Negro to win a best-actor nomination. But Hollywood "box-office-name" though he has become, he faced back to the stage to appear in "Raisin" not, he notes, for the prominent role that is the usual Hollywood-to-Broadway criterion, but for "a good role in a good play."

Other leading roles in the play are filled by Claudia McNeil, whose vocal talents were noted in the lead of "Simply Heavenly" but who has her first major stage role in "Raisin"; Ruby Dee, who has played Poitier's sister on stage and screen and his wife in three films as well as in "Raisin"; Louis Gossett, who appeared in "Take a Giant Step," "The Desk Set" and "Lost in the Stars" at the City Center, and Diana Sands, a veteran of films and off-Broadway plays.

'A RAISIN IN SUN' BASKS IN PRAISE

7 Critics Welcome Play by Miss Hansberry — 'Room in Paris' Reserved

By SAM ZOLOTOW
For the second day in a row, the New York drama critics welcomed a new Broadway presentation with unanimous reviews. The much sought-after distinction went to "A Raisin in the Sun" yesterday. On Wednesday the accolade was bestowed upon "Sweet Bird of Youth."

"Raisin" had a more rugged road to travel than "Sweet Bird." The latter was fortified with an established dramatist (Tennessee Williams), a top director (Elia Kazan) and three well-known stars (Paul Newman, Geraldine Page and Sidney

Blackmer). The situation was different with "A Raisin." The author (Lorraine Hansberry), director (Lloyd Richards) and the sponsors (Phillip Rose and David J. Cogan) were Broadway newcomers.

Only four of the players in the Negro drama had achieved more, the attraction received trial performances in New Haven, Philadelphia and Chicago. Although out-of-town reviewers praised the offering, there was no immediate box-office stampede. It did not take long, however, before capacity trade prevailed.

Mr. Rose attributed the spurt in each case to this observation: "During the first fifteen minutes the audience gets color blind and they no longer see Negroes on the stage."

The Shuberts booked "Raisin" into the Barrymore, a desirable house, with confidence. To arrange the booking, they persuaded the producers to send the play to Chicago, guaranteed it against loss there and shared in the transportation cost.

According to Walter Fried, general manager for Messrs. Rose and Cogan, the advance sale here amounts to \$160,000. The sum was accumulated from six parties for the entire seating capacity of 1,076, a number of partial parties, mail orders and window sale.

A total of 147 investors have a stake in the destiny of "Raisin." The major backer is Charles Swibel of Chicago. Attendance at yesterday's matinee of "Raisin" was below expectations and almost at the sell-out mark for "Sweet Bird."

'A Raisin in the Sun'

Negro Drama Given at Ethel Barrymore

By BROOKS ATKINSON

IN "A Raisin in the Sun," which opened at the Ethel Barrymore Wednesday evening, Lorraine Hansberry touches on some serious problems. No doubt, her feelings about them are as strong as any one's.

But she has not tipped her play to prove one thing or another. The play is honest. She has told the inner as well as the outer truth about a Negro family in the South Side of Chicago at the present time. Since the performance is also honest and since Sidney Poitier is a candid actor, "A Raisin in the Sun" has vigor as well as veracity, and is likely to destroy the complacency of any one who sees it.

The family consists of a firm-minded widow, her daughter, her restless son and his wife and son. The mother has brought up her family in a tenement that is small, battered but personable. All the mother wants is that her children adhere to the code of honor and self-respect that she inherited from her parents.

The son is dreaming of success in a business deal. And the daughter, who is race-conscious, wants to become a physician and heal the wounds of her people. After a long delay the widow receives \$10,000 as the premium on her husband's life insurance. The money projects the family into a series of situations that test their individual characters.

What the situations are does not matter at the moment. For "A Raisin in the Sun" is a play about human beings who want, on the one hand, to preserve their family pride and, on the other hand, to break out of the poverty that seems to be their fate. Not having any axe to grind, Miss Hansberry has a wide range of topics to write about—some of them hilarious, some of them painful in the extreme.

You might, in fact, regard

"A Raisin in the Sun" as a Negro "The Cherry Orchard." Although the social scale of the characters is different, the knowledge of how character is controlled by environment is much the same, and the alternation of humor and pathos is similar.

If there are occasional crudities in the craftsmanship, they are redeemed by the honesty of the writing. And also by the rousing honesty of the stage work. For Lloyd Richards has selected an admirable cast and directed a bold and stirring performance.

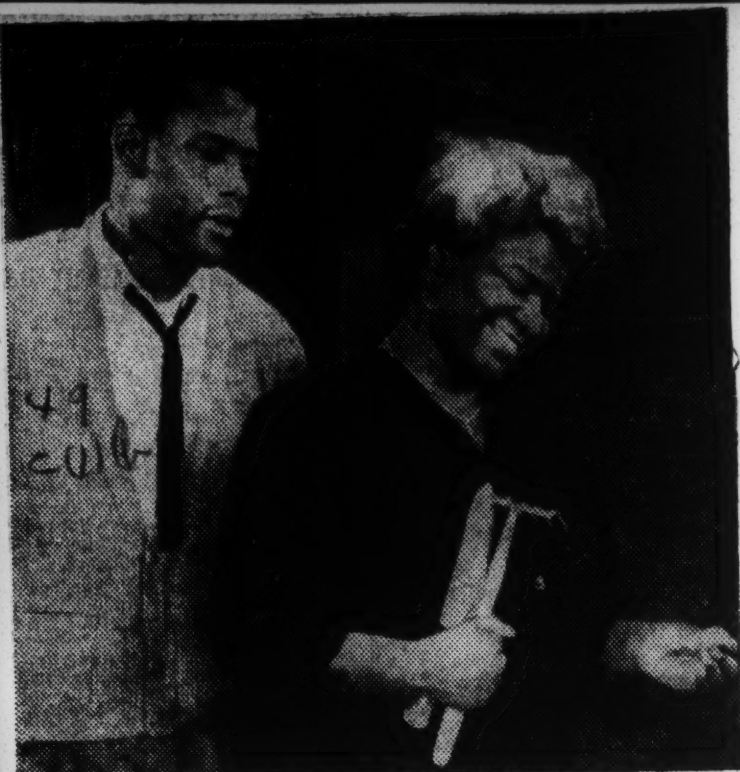
Mr. Poitier is a remarkable actor with enormous power that is always under control. Cast as the restless son, he vividly communicates the tumult of a high-strung young man. He is as eloquent when he has nothing to say as when he has a pungent line to speak. He can convey devious processes of thought as graphically as he can clown and dance.

As the matriarch, Claudia McNeil gives a heroic performance. Although the character is simple, Miss McNeil gives it nobility of spirit. Diana Sands' amusing portrait of the overintellectualized daughter; Ivan Dixon's quiet, sagacious student from Nigeria; Ruby Dee's young wife burdened with problems; Louis Gossett's supercilious suitor; John Fiedler's timid white man, who speaks sanctimonious platitudes—bring variety and excitement to a first-rate performance.

All the crises and comic sequences take place inside Ralph Alswang's set, which depicts both the poverty and the taste of the family. Like the play, it is honest. That is Miss Hansberry's personal contribution to an explosive situation in which simple honesty is the most difficult thing in the world. And also the most illuminating.

The Cast

A RAISIN IN THE SUN, a drama by Lorraine Hansberry. Staged by Lloyd Richards; presented by Philip Rose and David J. Cogan; scenery and lighting by Ralph Alswang; costumes by Virginia Volland; production stage manager, Leonard Auerbach. At the Ethel Barrymore Theatre.
Ruth Younger.....Ruby Dee
Travis Younger.....Glynn Turman
Walter Lee Younger.....Sidney Poitier
Beneatha Younger.....Diana Sands
Lena Younger.....Claudia McNeil
Joseph Asagai.....Ivan Dixon
George Murchison.....Louis Gossett
Bobo.....Lonne Elder
Karl Lindner.....John Fiedler
Moving Men.....Ed Hall, Douglas Turner



Sidney Poitier and Cláudia McNeil as they appear in play by Lorraine Hansberry, "A Raisin in the Sun."

'Raisin In Sun' among Broadway's fastest hits

Chicago-American
Baltimore, Md.

Sat 5-2-59 ing night buoy to \$56,302.

NEW YORK—On box office receipts alone, "Raisin In the Sun" already ranks as one of the fastest payoff shows in recent Broadway history.

The entire initial investment of \$100,000 has already been recouped, according to figures released by the Barrymore Theatre management. And the play only had run for six weeks at the time.

"Raisin," the first play by a colored authoress — Lorraine Hansberry — and the first staged by a colored director to reach Broadway, also has forthcoming a \$300,000 revenue from sale of the film rights to Columbia Pictures.

THE PRODUCTION'S slice of the picture income (40 per cent, less 10 per cent commissions) will be \$108,000, representing a profit of over 100 per cent. The presentation, which recently topped the N.Y. Critics Circle Award as the best American play of the season, cost \$51,351 to produce. Pre-New York opening expenses accounted for another \$10,443, but operating profit of \$5,492 on a seven-week out-of-town tryout reduced the open-

IRONICALLY, the drama, which has been playing to capacity business at the Barrymore, launched its tryout tour without having a Broadway house booked.

It wasn't until after the show's opening in New Haven that general manager Walter Fried succeeded in getting the Shuberts to book the entry into the Barrymore.

However, since the theatre was committed for several weeks to the longrun "Look Homeward, Angel," the tryout run of "Raisin" was extended with a four-week Chicago stand, which the Shuberts guaranteed against loss.

The rental on the Barrymore is a straight 30 per cent of the gross, while Miss Hansberry gets the Dramatists Guild minimum of 5 per cent of the first \$5,000 of the gross, 7½ per cent of the next \$2,000 and 10 per cent of the balance.

Lloyd Richards gets 2 per cent of the gross as director.

Second Time Around

'Raisin in the Sun' Earned Its Laurel

By HENRY T. MURDOCK

On a January night we dashed out of the Walnut, prodded by an excitement we hadn't felt during the several previous months of a stop-go season. We started our review as follows:

"If the true functions of drama are to stimulate (perhaps harass) the conscience, mourn defeat, cheer aspiration and sing to courage—and we believe they are—then Lorraine Hansberry's 'A Raisin in the Sun' meets these obligations in fuller measure than any play we have seen this season."

To extend the remarks as they do in the Congressional Record, nothing we have seen since, however excellent, has met these obligations in the same superb manner.

NOW PULITZER!

In our book, "A Raisin in the Sun" is the best play presented during this 1958-59 season and we rejoice with Miss Hansberry that her first produced play has been given the New York Drama Critics Circle award.

Now bring on your Pulitzer Prize!

Miss Hansberry, 28, (in private life the wife of Robert Nemiroff, song writer and music publisher) tore up three plays before settling down to "A Raisin in the Sun."

She is the first Negro woman ever to have a play produced on Broadway and her protagonists are a Negro family, slum-trapped in Chicago who implement their desire for better living via many methods, some good; some bad.

The play has a murmur of racial idiom, muted but rich. It investigates racial prejudice, principally as it affects housing, without running a high fever. To this extent, it has a specialized story line but as the play progresses its boundaries expand.

SUCCEEDS IN PURPOSE

The courageous, humorous, sometimes wrong-headed, some-

times noble members of her harassed family amply fulfill the playwright's quoted desire to "express something about American life in general beyond race and color."

We believe that she succeeds grandly in this purpose. In fact, in our original review we attributed world-wide impulses to her play by comparing some of its elements to Sean O'Casey's "Juno and the Paycock."

It was with great interest therefore that we read last week her statement to one interviewer that her "literary god is Sean O'Casey... who... establishes the nobility of man by showing him in all his marvelous complexity" and to another that like O'Casey, she wishes to speak of "deep compassion and love."

"PLAYABLE" PLAY

Now if aspiration, love, compassion and these other good things were all needed to make a successful play, Pearl Buck's "A Desert Incident" might have been in the award—running instead of having closed so precipitously on Broadway.

One of the amazing aspects of Miss Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" is its enormous "playability," its development of valid andactable characters, its intuitive climaxes. For a newcomer in the business, she has wrought with uncommon skill.

She was fortunate in her cast. Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil (especially Claudia McNeil!), Diana Sands, Ruby Dee, Louis Gossett, Ivan Dixon represented one of the finest player combinations of the season, matched only by the Geraldine Page-Paul Newman-Sidney Blackmer-Rip Torn lineup in Tennessee Williams'

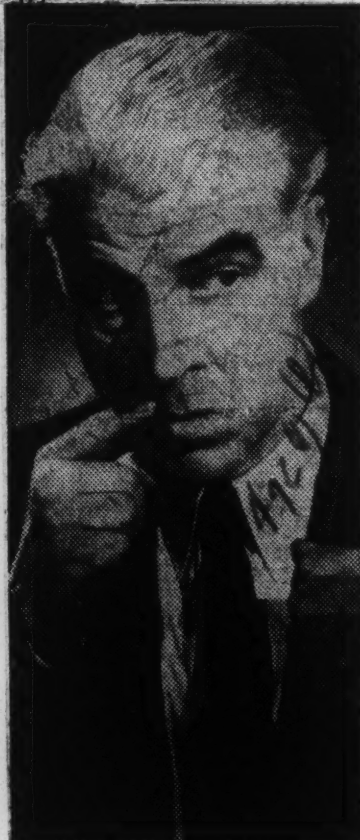
"Sweet Bird of Youth." There were both quality and restraint also in the direction of Lloyd Richards.

LAURELS WELL WON

Actors and director gave life and vigor to the drama; they matched its creator in their sincerity of expression.

But first always comes the playwright, first always the ability to either say something new or to restate old thoughts in arresting manner.

On all counts, Miss Hansberry has won her laurels, "fair and square."



Emlyn Williams presents one-man show in "A Boy Growing Up," Academy of Music Thursday evening.

'RAISIN IN THE SUN'

Vivid Drama About A Poor Negro Family

By BROOKS ATKINSON

ALTHOUGH the acting in Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" is

excellent, it never seems excessive under the direction of Lloyd Richards, the scenes of crisis in the script touch off explosions in the performance. But the explosions never give an impression of being arbitrary.

For Miss Hansberry has written a homely play about the day-to-day anxieties of a Negro family on the South Side of Chicago. Some of the troubles are uproariously funny; some of them are harrowing. Since the characters have great capacity for feeling, the emotional range is wide. The nervous, tensely paced performance of Sidney Poitier as the wayward son and the highly wrought performance of Claudia McNeil as the unyielding matriarch have solid footing in the script. Everything is a piece of writing, staging and acting.

The title comes from a poem by Langston Hughes—"What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up/Like a raisin in the sun?" Literally, the plot of Miss Hansberry's drama revolves around \$10,000 that the mother receives from the life insurance of her dead husband. The son, who is tired of working as a chauffeur, wants to invest it in a liquor store and become a big shot in the community. The mother wants to buy a house for herself and her family. Ever since she was married she has dreamed of escaping from their grubby tenement.

What happens to the \$10,000 supplies the dynamic of the drama. Since "A Raisin in the Sun" has the gift of emotionally involving the audience in the crises of the play, the audience cannot be indifferent to the solution. But Miss Hansberry has not written a melodrama or a thesis-play or a morality. She has rendered a practical accounting of the life of a family. Even if the plot were less commonplace, "A Raisin in the Sun" would still be a vivid play.

Pungent Notes

For Miss Hansberry has managed to express a personal opinion about many engrossing topics. The belligerent racism of the daughter who is attending college, her provincial ignorance of Africa, her confusion of Liberia and Nigeria, the

amused maturity of a college student who comes from Africa, the sophomoric sophistication of an American college student—these are pungent notes by the way set down by Miss Hansberry out of experience, observation and a sense of comedy.

When the mother buys a house in a white neighborhood, "A Raisin in the Sun" touches on the inflammatory topic of race relations. Miss Hansberry faces the issue frankly, giving the spokesman for the white people as much dignity as his humiliating situation affords. But she argues no causes. Note that she resolves the situation not in terms of social justice but in terms of the pride of a family that has ethical standards. Not the least remarkable aspect of "A Raisin in the Sun" is the unvarying humanity of the author's point of view. Although Miss Hansberry is aware of the big social and political issues, she has sufficient independence of mind to concentrate on the everyday problems of a family. She has succeeded in confining herself to what she wants to say.

If she is lucky in her actors, they are lucky in their author. Her play gives them the opportunity to stage a rousing performance that is supported by the simple truths of the story. Apart from Mr. Poitier's searching performance and Miss McNeil's characterization of a worn woman with a noble spirit, the cast includes other excellent actors—notably Diana Sands as the acrimonious daughter who knows all the slogans but very little about life. Altogether, "A Raisin in the Sun" is a lively and illuminating drama about people of great emotional vitality.

Bankruptcy in Musicals

TEN years ago we were all piously assuring ourselves that at least in the field of music drama the American theatre was supreme. The supremacy is invisible this season. There has not been a single musical play of distinction. In "Redhead" the incandescent Gwen Verdon has to shine amid dull material. "Flower Drum Song" represents Rodgers and Hammerstein without genius.

Although we have had seven musical plays this season (excluding "La Plume de Ma Tante," which is hilarious vaudeville), we have had nothing in the category of "West Side Story," "The Music Man" or "My Fair Lady." No wonder they are still drawing audiences; they have not been challenged this year.

"First Impressions" represents the successful formula when it is empty. If there were no such thing as imponderables in a work of art, it would give audiences as much pleasure as "My Fair Lady." It is based on Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," a novel that expresses a gleaming mind with a sardonic twist; and it is set in a period of English manners that looks glamorous from the viewpoint of today. Like "My Fair Lady," "First Impressions" has some attractive performers (Polly Bergen, Farley Granger and James Mitchell) and the usual arsenal of songs, dances, scenery and costumes.

But it lacks taste; and in these circumstances, the lack of taste is disastrous. Although Hermione Gingold's broad, prancing, music-hall style is probably designed to compensate for the banality of the rest of the show, it is depressing because it is low comedy out of context.

An empty show like "First Impressions" indicates the importance to "My Fair Lady" of the intangible element of taste. Like all musical productions, "My Fair Lady" is compounded of thousands of details that have to be considered and planned. But on the stage it has an effortless flow of beauty that looks unpremeditated. Through refinements of style, the interior life of the story is translated into glow and rapture on the stage.

None of the musical plays of this season has come to life with so much spontaneity.

'Raisin' proves bonanza

Ohio-American
Baltimore, Md.
P. 15
Sat. 7-18-59

for Lorraine Hansberry

NEW YORK — "A Raisin in the Sun," voted by the New York Drama Critics as the best American play of the 1958-1959 season, is reaping profits galore for its author, producers and backers.

Currently in the 19th week on B'way, the play has earned more than a half-million dollars.

This amount has been dumped into the box office tills from nightly capacity audiences, who spend more than \$42,000 a week to see the play; \$300,000 for the film rights plus a \$7,500 advance for the European rights.

IN THE case of authoress Lorraine Hansberry, her profits already exceed one-quarter million dollars; aside from the \$180,000 which she received from the film rights, her royalty on the play is 5 percent of the first \$5,000, 7½ percent of the next \$2,000 and 10 percent of the balance.

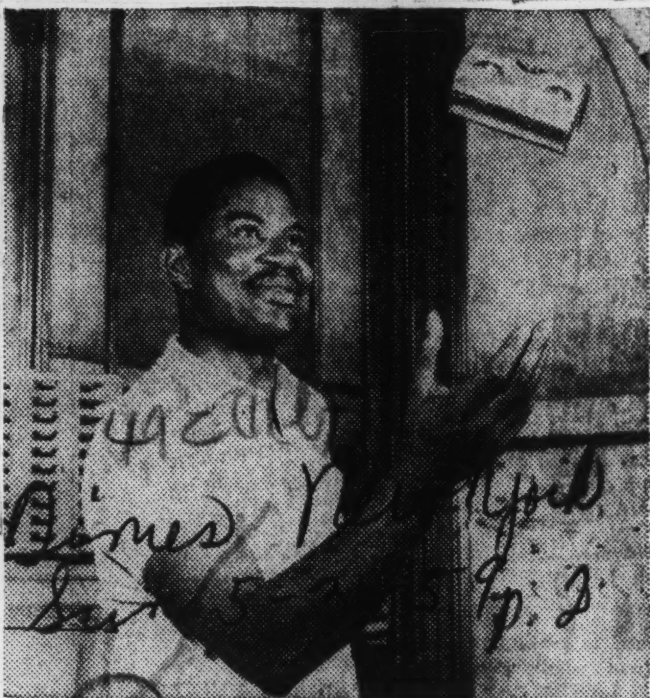
Doing a capacity business weekly, the play earns in excess of \$42,000 bringing her share to close to \$4,000 per week. When you add up its 19 weeks here plus its highly successful run out of town, her share is close to \$90,000.

CO-PRODUCERS Philip Rose and David Cogan and "Raisin's" many investors are also doing financially well. They share \$120,000 from film rights and got their \$100,000 investment back within six weeks, having already earned over \$200,000.

The play is in the 200 percent profit bracket. Which means, that for every dollar an investor put in, he is now getting back three.

OF THE \$60,000 already paid to the production by Columbia Pictures, \$54,000 is included in the profits distributed to the backers. The remaining \$6,000 went to the management, whose share of the film coin will also be \$54,000 when the \$48,000 balance is paid.

Besides the film income and weekly operating profit, the net earnings thus far reflect \$7,500 as an advance on the sale of the British rights to John Shubert, who's producing the play in London with Jack Hylton.



Ossie Davis, who stands by for Sidney Poitier in "A Raisin in the Sun." He will take over the starring role in the play next September.



LORRAINE HANSBERRY



ROBESON PLAYS OTHELLO— Paul Robeson made a triumphant return after an absence of 23 years from the British stage last week. Curtain call after curtain call paid tribute to the 61-year-old actor for his "Othello"

opposite Mary Ure (Desdemona). The play marks the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre's 100th season and the selection of Robeson as the star of the celebration was a rare and distinct honor.

Negro Play Voted Tops

NEW YORK (AP) — "A Raisin in the Sun," a play written, acted and directed by Negroes, was voted Tuesday the best American play on Broadway during the 1958-59 season by the New York Drama Critics Circle.

The play, which stars Sidney Poitier and was written by Lorraine Hansberry, received six votes.

"JB," the Archibald MacLeish verse drama based on Biblical Job's search for faith, and Tennessee Williams' "Sweet Bird of Youth" tied for second place with five votes each.

"La Plume de Ma Tante," playing on Broadway an all-French cast, received the award as best musical.

Best foreign play away went to "The Visit," which was adapted by Maurice Valency and starred Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne.

'Jamaica' to close after 557 performances

NEW YORK — "Jamaica," which played its 550th performance Monday night is now in its final week at the Imperial. The Lena Horne-Richard Montalban co-starrer, a David Merrick production, opened at the popular on Oct. 31, 1957.

When it closes this Saturday night (Apr. 11) it will have played a total of 557 performances. "Destry Rides Again," the new musical co-starring Andy Griffith, Dolores Gray and Scott Brady, opens at the Imperial April 23.

Praise Heaped on Robeson For London 'Othello' Role

By SHIRLEY GRAHAM

LONDON—We have just returned to London after being guests of the Robesons in Stratford-upon-Avon. And so we have been privileged to share in making English history. Shakespeare himself would have been intrigued. For I do not mean theatrical history alone, though not since the beginning of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre has an entire season of one play been sold out within the first week of its performance. (The last performance of "Othello" will be in November.)

The arilway switchman, leaning through the window of our train compartment to gravely tell us, "England will never find another Othello equal to Mr. Robeson," would hardly claim to be a theatrical critic or an expert on Shakespeare. But since last April this switchman at Leamington Spa has witnessed a transformation in the famous, old Shakespeare country. Trains, buses, automobiles, planes, boats are bringing people to Stratford-upon-Avon from all over the world: people who rush by Warwick Castle without a glance, who do not ask the way to Ann Hathaway's cottage, people who have no time to visit Shakespeare's grave in their eagerness to "cue up" to see Paul Robeson!

STANDING ROOM is sold for each performance for the capacity of the theatre. And unless you are one of those fortunate souls who secured a ticket long ago, or who has a friend who has a friend inside some magic circle, standing room is all you are going to get.

There is no question about it, the regulars at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre are top cream. The service in the Theatre Restaurant where no "standees" are admitted would prove that if nothing else did. But the packed audience which greets every performance of Othello is unusual for Stratford-upon-Avon.

Shakespeare for many of them is a new experience. In fact, some make no secret of the fact that they would "prefer hearing Paul sing," but they are willing "to take" Shakespeare's lines so long as it's Paul Robeson giving them!

Considering the fact that until last August Paul has not performed in England for 15 years, and that he never was a Frank Sinatra or Liberace, his teen-age following is amazing. A group of them were waiting in the cold for him when we finally left the theatre after a late supper. Paul returned the youngsters' greeting with warm cordiality, autographed sheets of paper for them and sent them away happy though they could not get in to see his performance.

REACTIONS of some Americans which I had witnessed at the box office were quite different.

"I was told we'd have no trouble getting tickets!" exploded one man. "We're putting up at a hotel 40 miles away because everything is full around here and now you tell me there are no tickets!"

"We've come all the way from America to see this production," wailed a lady.

"Tough," I murmured, and grinned.

Being starred in the 100th anniversary performance of Shakespeare Memorial Theatre is absolute tops for any actor. And this stardom is being heaped upon Paul without stint. A more lavish production of Othello cannot be conceived—more splendid and rich gowns than those worn by Robeson have not been designed. The artistry of skillful directing highlights every move of Robeson.

And how magnificently he fills the role! His presence is compelling, his voice runs all the scale of human emotions, his eyes melt the heart one moment and flash with passion the next. I saw Robeson's first Othello in London in 1930, I saw the Theatre Guild production in New York. Beyond all question, here in his 61st year, Paul has given his best performance. Moreover, there is general agreement in London that all previous Othellos simply fade into insignificance beside Robeson's.

AND HOW DOES the quiet, green, steeped-in-tradition English county take all this? Gentry, of course, attend the performances at the Shakespeare Theatre, dine in the Restaurant and entertain

Paul Robeson in their drawing rooms. Town people of Stratford, Warwick, Leamington Spa and other nearby villages share Robeson whenever possible. While we were at the Robeson cottage there came a committee of cricket players inviting Paul to participate in a soon to be played cricket match.

It seemed that the honor of the county was at stake, but if Paul Robeson would come and "kick off" the first ball, victory would be assured. They told me that when Shakespeare's birthday was celebrated in April as is done every year, the villages vied with each other in getting Paul Robeson to preside over various celebrations. At the Memorial church services held on Sunday morning, Robeson read the Morning Lesson.

Behind stardom in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre is all the prestige and glamor of the British Empire. No artist can go any higher in our western culture. And herein lies the historical epic now being played out in Stratford-upon-Avon. For Paul Robeson embodies in his person seething, erupting Africa. His voice carries the overtones of America's Negro Spiritual, the poetry of his soul has been enriched by Pushkin, within his soul is blended the song of the Volga boatman and the Mississippi dock worker. After 11 months of travel our visit to Stratford-upon-Avon was the perfect climax, the rounding off pinnacle—the arrow pointing home.

'Porgy and Bess' Cited As Best U. S. Musical

NEW YORK—The history of "Porgy and Bess" is just about as dramatic as any scene you will see between Sidney Poitier and Dorothy Dandridge who are playing the title roles in this Samuel Goldwyn film version of the world renowned folk opera. It's a history which started back in 1926 when George Gershwin first read the novel "Porgy."

Then and there, he decided it was perfect for an American music drama. In 1935, he completed, finally, his dream from the libretto by DuBoise Heyward, and with lyrics by Heyward and his brother, Ira Gershwin. What the late composer felt about "Porgy," has been so right down through many stage years. It's even listed in the Encyclopedia Britannica as the greatest American musical ever written.

The "Porgy and Bess" citation is contained in a listing of the world's 25 greatest composers. Gershwin, who composed the score for the Samuel Goldwyn gigantic picture, is the first American to be listed with such musical immortals as Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Ravel, Chopin, Franck, Puccini and Debussy.

C. Beam, James supervisor of Anson and Caswell Counties, wrote a play, "The Story of James Supervisor," which was presented recently in the CCTS Auditorium, Yanceyville, N. C.

Sunday Star Washington D.C.

Sun. 5-17-59

P. 1-E



LES BALLETS AFRICAINS: BOTH ETHNIC AND EXCITING

The dances of Les Ballets Africains, the frenzy and vigor of which are captured here by Artist Sam Norkin, will be on display at the National Theater for a week, starting tomorrow night. The program includes numbers with their roots

in old African civilizations, bearing such titles as "Porteuses d'Eau," "La Culture," "Dance de Feu," "Coundedon" and "Enian Adje." The company was assembled by Keith Fodeba during a seven-year African talent search.



AUTHOR OF PLAY—Mrs. T.

'Raisin' Cops Prize Despite 'Boycott'

NEW YORK — What may long be remembered as one of the mysteries of Broadway, in the manner in which drama critics of the major New York newspapers boycotted "Raisin in the Sun" in the voting for best American play of the year. The all-colored (written, produced, acted and directed) play by Lorraine Hansberry won the Drama Critics Award, topping works by such experienced hands as Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, and Archibald MacLeish.

"RAISIN," which stars Sidney Poitier and features Ruby Dee and Claudia McNeil, received six first place ballots, but none was from any of the seven major dailies of the city.

Williams' "Sweet Bird of Youth," O'Neill's "A Touch of the Poet" and MacLeish's "J. B." were in a three-way tie for second with five votes each.

Despite the fact that the play was given favorable reviews by all the major critics when it opened March 11, the Times, Herald-Tribune, News, Mirror, Telegram-Sun, Journal-American and Post shunned "Raisin" in favor of one or another of the other productions.

BROOKS ATKINSON (Times) and John Chapman (News) voted for "J.B.," while Walter Kerr (Herald-Tribune), John McClain (Journal) and Frank Aston (Telegram) cast for "Sweet Bird of Youth."

Robert Coleman (Mirror) and Richard Watts Jr. (Post) selected "A Touch of the Poet."

Miss Hansberry's effort was balloted to the top spot by Whitney Bolton, of the Morning Telegraph; Jack Gaver, of United Press International; Henry Hewes, of the Saturday Review; Emory Lewis, of Cue; Joseph Shipley, of the New Leader, and Kenneth Tynan, of the New Yorker.

THE 28-YEAR-OLD Miss Hansberry thus became not only the first colored playwright to win the award, but

the first woman of any race to be so honored.

Her "Raisin in the Sun" concerns itself with the life of a colored family on Chicago's South Side.

When she heard the news of her selection, Miss Hansberry was alone with her dog, Spice, in her small third-floor walkup apartment at 337 Bleeker St.

"IT'S A little hard to digest," Miss Hansberry said of her triumph. "We felt we were doing something good and we felt we were doing something important for the theater."

"Whether we would have any recognition was another question. Now that it's happened, it's beautiful."

MISS HANSBERRY said her success, while perhaps increasing the demands upon her time, would not interfere with her schedule of work.

That, she said, was laid out even before "A Raisin in the Sun" opened March 11 at the Barrymore Theater.

She judged that it would be "a long time" before her next play is ready — perhaps a year or two.

Her Dream Came True

Lorraine Hansberry

LORRAINE HANSBERRY began by wanting to be a painter. She was a "lousy painter," in her own words. She then turned to writing.

That she is not a busy writer is attested to by the fact that Tuesday she won the New York Drama Critics Circle award for the best American play of the season. There are a number of "not only" involved in her triumph. Not only is she just 28

years old; not only is she a Negro; not only is she the first Negro woman ever to have a play on Broadway, let alone to win an award; but also "A Raisin in the Sun" was her first produced play.

Miss Hansberry, who in her domestic life is Mrs. Robert Nemiroff, wife of a music publisher and song writer, is voluble, energetic, pretty and small. She does not lack for ideas: before "A Raisin in the Sun" she had written three other plays, all unfinished and unproduced, short stories and fragments of stories and plays. A kind of literary limbo was hers.

Had Audience for Work

She did have an audience for her work—her husband and their friends. One evening, after seeing a play, she told her husband that she was going to "write a social drama about Negroes that will be good art." She did, after writing a four-hour effort that was really two plays. Revision, excision and concision resulted in "A Raisin in the Sun."

Miss Hansberry was born in Chicago, the daughter of a well-to-do real estate man. She studied painting at the Chicago Art Institute and the University of Wisconsin, and there was a painting period in Guadalajara, Mexico.

She came to New York in 1950 and was married in 1953. For a few years after her marriage she worked at various jobs—salesgirl, cashier, producer's helper—and, meantime, kept writing. In 1954 she turned to plays.

Her literary god is Sean O'Casey, the Irish playwright, who, she says, "establishes the nobility of man by showing him in all his marvelous complexity."

'Or Does It Explode?'

Miss Hansberry, whose play is about Negroes, is exasperated by producers who think of plays with Negro characters as "Negro plays." Her play, she says, is about believable, many-sided people who happen to be Negroes. It was produced by two men who had never produced a play before—Philip Rose and David J. Cogan.

Her play, she says, is concerned with dreams, the dreams that all persons have, the dreams that are problems. But she believes that "science will bring more rewards for our generation than mysticism."

The title of her play comes from a poem by Langston Hughes called "Harlem." The poem asks: "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Does it fester like a sore and then run? Or does it explode?"

Miss Hansberry, whose dreams have neither dried up nor festered nor exploded, lives in Bleeker Street, Greenwich Village, with her husband and a dog named Spice. They live in a walk-up apartment, lined with books. Miss Hansberry likes to ski, to go to the theatre, to see movies. She likes to play table tennis and would like, and is planning, to write more plays and perhaps some opera libretti.



Thurs. 4-9-59
Not a "Negro play," but one about people who happen to be Negroes.
BROADWAY'S BEST:

Surprise

Against such high candlepower writers as Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Archibald MacLeish, a young playwright with her first play—and the first Broadway drama written by a Negro woman and directed and acted by Negroes—captured the yearly best-play award of the New York Drama Critics Circle last week.

The winner was "A Raisin in the Sun," the touching drama of a tenement family and their vanished dreams (NEWSWEEK, March 23). The author was 28-year-old Lorraine Hansberry, a small, attractive woman who lives with her music-publisher, songwriter-husband and a dog in a New York Greenwich Village walkup.

"I hadn't thought in terms of prizes," she said after the announcement of her triumph (six critics voted for "Raisin"; second were "Sweet Bird of Youth" and "JB" with five votes each, and third was "A Touch of the Poet" with three). "But I can't honestly say it was more than we expected. We had brilliant actors and a brilliant director. No, I don't think my being a Negro had anything to do

with the award. I certainly hope not... Everyone always wants to know what changes all this has made in my life, and if my husband and I are planning to move. We're not, and it's getting to be a joke... I started writing plays just by sitting down and writing. It is hard to discuss what I am working on now, but it will be different." Miss Hansberry figures her next will take her a year or two to write. "Raisin" took a year. ▶The Critics' other annual awards: Best foreign play went to Friedrich Duerrenmatt's chilling "The Visit," with the Lunts. The best musical: The all-French revue, "La Plume de Ma Tante."

Pulitzer Prize Next?

Critics Select 'Raisin' Best American Play of the Year

Pittsburgh Courier
NEW YORK. By no means can "A Raisin in the Sun" be considered a dream that's drying like a raisin in the sun as far as Broadway is concerned. In fact, since it was planted here the middle of last month, it has been bearing all kinds of fruit daily. Last week it really came into full bloom when the Critics Circle selected it as the "Best American Play of the Year."

Pittsburgh Courier
The first play by a Negro lady to hit the big stream of the legitimate sea, the Lorraine Hansberry pen work is making as much history as it is money. Starring Sidney Poitier and a super supporting cast of Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee and Diana Sands, among others, "Raisin" played to standing room last week. As a result it racked up a tremendous 40-odd thousand dollar gross for the period.

The selection of "Raisin" as the best American play of the year was brought about through a close ballot. Out of the 14 members of the drama critics present and five proxies, the Phil Rose-David Cogan production received six votes, with Tennessee Williams' "Sweet Bird of Youth" a close second with five votes.

The much sought after designation of the drama critics' is like an angel's kiss for a Broadway show. So selected it is almost assured of a long stay on the street built for talent. The only honor higher is the coveted Pulitzer Prize. Perhaps that's next for Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun," which Broadway refuses to let dry up.



MISS LORRAINE HANSBERRY

'A Raisin in the Sun'

Drama Critics' Award Given to First Negro

Philadelphia Inquirer
NEW YORK, April 7.—Lorraine Hansberry, a 28-year-old Negro playwright, won the Drama Critics' award for best American play of the season today with her first play, "A Raisin in the Sun." She won "Drum Song," one vote for "The Seven Deadly Sins" and one abstention.

Miss Hansberry's play about the life of a Negro family on Chicago's south side is the first by a Negro to win a Drama Critics Circle award.

The voting was close. "A Raisin in the Sun" gained six votes. Tied for second at five votes each were "Sweet Bird of Youth" by Tennessee Williams and "J. B." by Archibald MacLeish. O'Neill's play was "A Touch of the Poet."

The critics, at their annual awards meeting at the Hotel Algonquin, also voted "The Visit" by Friedrich Duerrenmatt best play by a foreign author and the French revue, "La Plume De Ma Tante," best musical.

"A Raisin in the Sun" was produced by Philip Rose and directed by Lloyd Richards with the leading roles of son and mother played by Sidney Poitier and Claudia McNeil.

The critics voting in favor of "A Raisin in the Sun" were: Jack Gaver of the United Press International; Whitney Bolton of The Morning Telegraph; Kenneth Tynan of The New Yorker; Henry Hewes of The Saturday Review; Emory Lewis of Cue and Joseph T. Shipley of The New Leader.

The voting for the best foreign play was as follows: 10 votes for "The Visit," which opened with the Lunts last May; six votes for "Epitaph for George Dillon," the British play by John Osborne and Anthony Creighton which had two openings on Broadway this season; one vote for "The Power and the Glory," one vote for "Rashomon" and one abstention.

The voting for the best musical was as follows: 12 votes for "La Plume De Ma Tante," the all-French musical revue by Robert Dhery; three votes for "Red-head," two votes for "Flower



Associated Press

Playwright Hansberry: Another in two years?

NEW FILMS:

Classic of Catfish Row

new York
 PORGY AND BESS. A Samuel Goldwyn Production. Directed by Otto Preminger.

Mon. 7-6-59

The chances are that even the most forbidding collection of Hollywood hacks would have been hard put to make a really bad film version of George Gershwin's classic folk opera about Porgy, the crippled beggar of Catfish Row, and his pathetic love for the two-timing chippie, Bess. Gershwin's haunting score—heart-tugger that it is—would probably have triumphed over any production and casting deficiencies. If only for this reason, then, Samuel Goldwyn does not quite deserve all the personal accolades he will doubtless be getting this year for having produced this movie. (Goldwyn's publicity seems to be giving more credit to Goldwyn than to Gershwin.) On the other hand, produce it he did—a feat which, astonishingly enough, no other movie man had been able to accomplish in the 23 years since the original production in Boston. For bringing America's most illustrious native opera to the screens of the world, Goldwyn deserves all the credit he will get.

The cast is the last word in contemporary Negro talent. Sidney Poitier is the subtlest Porgy ever, and Dorothy Dandridge the sexiest Bess. Sammy Davis Jr. as Sportin' Life, the happy-dust peddler, may bother those in the audience conditioned by the jocular of Cab Calloway: Davis plays it strictly for slime. Unhappily, the singers who supplied the sound-track musical voices for the key performers are not given screen credit, an oversight that will be rectified here. Robert McFerrin, a former Metropolitan opera baritone, sings Porgy; Adele Addison, a concert and oratorio soprano, sings Bess. And splendidly, too.

►Summing Up: Gershwinner.



Poitier and Dandridge as Porgy and Bess

Pictures, Plays and Players

World-Telegram & Sun

More Backing for 'Porgy'

New York

By HENDERSON CLEAVES.

Another authority rang in today with an endorsement of the current Sam Goldwyn film version of "Porgy and Bess."

She is Kay Swift, a close friend of the late George Gershwin and his brother, Ira, who believes she has heard and seen "Porgy and Bess" more times and in more versions than anyone else.

"I was a little afraid about what Hollywood would do with 'Porgy and Bess,'" she said. "But it is wonderful. I have seen it three times and I'm just starting. It will be a great thing for young people who have never seen the opera produced."

She's a Composer, Too.

Miss Swift, a composer in her own right ("Can This Be Love?"), was one of a group of people who sang themselves hoarse for a year while George Gershwin was composing "Porgy and Bess."

"George liked to bounce the music off somebody," she recalled. "We rasped through the various songs for him while he worked, never changing the keys to make it easier for us. But none of us doubted for a minute that this was a masterpiece."

Recalling Gershwin's power of concentration, she said "Nothing ever bothered him. It was like a blindness when he was working. He was the same with everything. If he saw you juggling two coffee pots he would start practicing it and by evening he would be the best coffee pot juggler in the world."

He Came to Her Party.

She first met the composer in 1925 when he came to one of her parties and played the piano, leaping up shortly before 12 o'clock with the cry, "Excuse me, I've got to go to Europe," and haring off to a midnight sailing.

"People were reborn when

he played," Miss Swift remembers. "It was like getting a double shot of B-2."

* * *

Jean Rosenthal will design the lighting for "Connecticut Summer".

English actress Patricia Cutts will play the feminine lead in "The Clostin Case," a mystery drama by Raymond Bowers which will open Aug. 10 at the John Drew Theater, East Hampton, L. I.

John Ragin has replaced William Smithers as Bertram in the American Shakespeare Festival Theater production of "All's Well That Ends Well" at Stratford, Conn.

Alice Hughes



KAY SWIFT

... Heard it first

NEW YORK

"IT TAKES a long pull to get there," sings Jake, the fisherman, in Samuel Goldwyn's magnificent screen version of the Gershwin-Heyward opera, "Porgy and Bess." This line expresses the two years of struggle while the powerful folk opera was being prepared for its current screen treatment.

It has taken a long pull and the result is more hauntingly beautiful than anyone dared hope. The new film has actually added to the impact of the original work. At its premiere in New York, Goldwyn quoted an appraisal he liked best of all:

"This is the way George would have loved to see it."

It came from Kay Swift, a talented musician, a long-time friend of George Gershwin, and the one to whom he played and sang the plaintive and exuberant songs and tried out his brother Ira Gershwin's lyrics, as they were being written and composed. Kay was more or less midwife at the birth of "Porgy and Bess."

Kay herself is a musical comedy writer, with several big hits to her credit—"Can't We Be Friends," recorded by Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald and others. Also "Fine and Dandy," "Can This Be Love—" and more.

At present Kay is off on a tour to cities where "Porgy and Bess" opens. Attendance is huge and there is such demand by folks too young to have seen earlier presentations of the Gershwin opera to gain an acquaintance with the composer.

Story of 'Porgy and Bess' Music

Counterpointing the music, Kay adds her own experiences with the production of "Porgy and Bess," current and previous. Of its original opening in New York, she relates the drastic incident of John Bubbles who then played Sportin' Life, the role of Tony Davis, Jr., has in the Goldwyn production.

Bubbles had a brand new, skin-tight, emerald green suit for opening night. It was wicked and wonderful, but when he was cued to come on stage in it, a long silent wait ensued. Finally he appeared, back-to-the-audience. Astonishingly he lanced and sang his entire first number without once turning to face the puzzled first nighters. After the performance Bubbles was asked to sing at a brilliant opening-night party. He consented only on one condition: that George Gershwin would say to him, "I forgive you, John Bubbles."

Gershwin said the words and Bubbles was happy. Afterwards he explained why he had not been able to face the packed theater full of clamoring people. The zipper of his new green Sportin' Life suit failed to budge, up or down; he had no other costume to substitute, and there was no time to send for one. He therefore decided to do his number back-to-the-audience, and the show went on.

'Porgy' Producer Dies

London, Feb. 8 (AP)—The death of an American play producer John Wilkes, who was associated with the original United States production of "Porgy and Bess," was reported Sunday. Wilkes, 55, suffered a heart attack while doing housework in London theater Thursday night.

Porgy And Bess Is Cut In Stereo

Significant and imaginative cated and tested. The increased capacity of pioneering in the stereo field appears in the Monty Kelly album triple track tape for pick-up and of "Porgy and Bess Stereor-chestrations" released last week.

The former Paul Whiteman arranger has scored and arranged this instrumental version of the Gershwin classic, making specific use of the sensitives and advantages of today's stereophonic recording techniques for the first time in the recording of a major work. He assembled no less than 59 musicians, including a 25-piece string section, and gives the piece full symphonic jazz treatment.

Kelly set out with the idea that it was high time for arrangers to give stereo listeners music interpretation of the international that was not just picked up by classic, "Porgy and Bess," for multiple tapes, but was actually the new triple track stereophonic scored with the mechanical and process.

What he has achieved is a dynamic, unobstructed recording of the Gershwin favorite, rich in color, depth and mood. "Porgy and Bess" is Gershwin as Kelly likes him, and his interpretation of it reflects his own great feeling for the piece.

It was quite an undertaking. Basic to Kelly's new approach was the addition of a third microphone to the two, standard for conventional stereo recording. This third mike provides the center portion of the "triple track tape" of the finished recording. When this three-track tape was re-run in the studio's mixing room to produce the standard two tracks used in home stereo sets, the center tape is used as a bridge for shifting the emphasis of pick-up from left to right and back again. This bridge eliminates the abrupt, jarring, switching inevitably present in two-track recordings. The center, or bridge track makes for the smoothest blending of orchestral tones possible to date.

A big problem was that the tripe tape process made most existing recording studio facilities obsolete. Before Kelly could begin the long sessions of rehearsal and experimentation, special recording rooms had to be lo-

College Can Wait

Diahann's Star Rising

Not too many springs ago Diahann Carroll was a freshman at New York University, relieving her family's financial burden by modeling. Hearing that Lou Walters, the Latin Quarter impresario, was putting a show together to send to Europe, Diahann applied for a part.

Someone in Walters' office noted that Diahann was not only very pleasing to the eye but she caressed the ear with her vocal talents. The observer suggested her for an appearance on TV's "Chance of a Lifetime." She was a three-time winner on the program and came away three thousand dollars richer.

TRY SHOW BUSINESS

"My mother, father and I sat down to discuss what I should do with the money," Diahann recalls. "I told them I'd like to take the money and try show business. My father finally agreed that I should try it for a couple of years and if it didn't work out I should go back to school."

Diahann has yet to return to college. Her big break through the Broadway barrier came in "House of Flowers," followed by screen assignments in "Carmen Jones" and the recently completed "Porgy and Bess," in which she portrays Clara.

Rouben Mamoulian chose her for the film version of George Gershwin's classic. "He felt that I was Clara," Diahann explains, "and so did I." She never had the opportunity to work with Mamoulian, however, since he was replaced by director Otto Preminger just prior to the beginning of shooting.

JUSTIFIABLE RAGE

And how did she fare under Preminger's directorial whip? "He is a joy to work with. I know he has a reputation for being bombastic. But you must work with him to understand what he is doing. I had had that opportunity in 'Carmen Jones.' He does blow his stack but it's justifi-



In a scene from Sam Goldwyn's "Porgy and Bess," Pearl Bailey tries to comfort Diahann Carroll, who fears that her fisherman-husband will be drowned in a storm at sea, leaving newborn baby fatherless.

fied. If anybody on the set distrusts the actor from what he is trying to accomplish heaven help the person responsible."

While working on the film, Diahann renewed an acquaintance with Andre Previn, "Gigi" Oscar winner who also did the scoring for "Porgy and Bess." With the sanction of her husband, Monte Kay, vice president of United Artists' record division, Diahann and the Previn Trio teamed to make an album of Gershwin's songs.

"Previn," says the actress-singer, "is a genius. He's the



'Porgy' Star— Beautiful Dorothy Dandridge, who shares the title role honors in the Samuel Goldwyn film production of "Porgy and Bess," gets a pat on the back from Hon. Mrs. Iris King, Mayor of Kingston, Jamaica. In a statement out of Hollywood last week, Producer Goldwyn said, "All the world is now the state for 'Porgy and Bess.' It is a motion picture of proud people, and my pride in presenting it is immeasurable." Miss Dandridge is scheduled to say "I do" next month in a Greek Orthodox Church ceremony when she becomes the bride of nitery owner Jack Dennison.

'Porgy' Film Premiered In New York

By THOMAS R. WARING
Editor of The News and Courier
Charleston, S.C.

NEW YORK — For the fifth time in 32 years Porgy rode his goat-cart tonight from Charleston to New York. This time he came by way of Hollywood.

Samuel Goldwyn's film production of "Porgy and Bess" has lost none of the drama, color and melody of the folk opera which DuBose Heyward and George Gershwin wrote about the people of Catfish Row. It has added the spectacular qualities that come with a wide screen and special sound effects.

A cast starring some of the top-ranking Negro performers of the time has caught the turbulent spirit that Heyward created originally in this novel about the private lives of the beggar cripple and his neighbors. Into the fishermen, longshoremen and peddlers of an old Southern seaport the book breathed the mixture of good and evil that make up life for all races and regions.

Gershwin's music, now familiar throughout much of the world, has been sung with operatic skill — in many cases by voices belonging to artists off the screen. The sound has been dubbed in so deftly that unless someone told, the audience would never know it came from any source but the actors.

The screen production makes little effort to re-

produce the Gullah dialect. In a few cases the speech comes out more like a class in elocution than the argot of the Lowcountry.

AP Reporter Lauds 'Porgy'

... See Page 1-B.

Sidney Poitier is an expressive Porgy. Dorothy Dandridge as Bess is the seductive but vacillating woman who brings love to an otherwise bleak existence. Sammy Davis as Sportin' Life portrays the slinky spirit of evil with the proper comic effects. Pearl Bailey is a straight-forward and hearty Maria, and Brock Peters — who played in a previous stage production of "Porgy and Bess" — is a powerful, sinister Crown. Ruth Attaway as Serena turns in one of the most moving performances of the picture with the scene mourning her murdered husband.

The picnic and the hurricane — symbolic moments of joy and sorrow that set the mood for the story — have been accomplished with the screen's own special adaptability for showing motion and crowds. The scenery effectively backs up the theme though the scenes were shot far from Charleston.

A dressy crowd attended the world premiere tonight at the Warner Theater, Broadway and 47th Street. In the audience were Mrs. DuBose Heyward, widow of the Charleston author, and Samuel Goldwyn, the producer.

The first production of Porgy was a stage play that opened in New York in 1927. George Gershwin, who had wanted to write an opera from the story since first reading the novel, came to Charleston in 1934 to start composing the music. The first production of "Porgy and Bess" opened in 1935 in Boston, coming two weeks later to a relatively cool reception on Broadway.

A second musical production opened with much greater success in 1941 and ran for three years. The third musical production — fourth dramatic version of the story — met even greater acclaim from its opening in 1953. This production went to Vienna, Berlin, London, Paris and — with the blessing of the U. S. State Dept. — behind the Iron Curtain.

Now that it has been recorded permanently in a handsome two-hour film Porgy's story is set for un-

limited travel. Pulsing with the elements of human drama familiar to people everywhere, it has little if any racial significance. Only those looking for propaganda need find it in the joys and sorrows of these unlettered but by no means ignorant characters.



"PORGY AND BESS"—Three of the principals appear in scenes from Samuel Goldwyn's screen version of the George Gershwin folk opera, starting a reserved-seat run on Wednesday night at the Warner. Left, Dorothy Dandridge, as the sultry

Bess, enters Catfish Row. Center, Sidney Poitier, as the crippled Porgy, happily renders "I Got Plenty O' Nuthin'" to some small friends. Right, Sammy Davis Jr., as the evil Sportin' Life, sings "It Ain't Necessarily So" during an island picnic.

Porgy's Mother Still Alive, Unaware Of Fame Which World Gave 'Goat Sammy'

By OTIS PERKINS

News And Courier Staff Writer

Porgy, a crippled Charleston Negro immortalized in music and folklore, is remembered by his mother as a "good boy who like to sing."

Porgy's mother still lives here. Old and nearly destitute, she occupies a two-room hut on Meeting Street Road just north of Mount Pleasant Street.

She remembers many things about Porgy. But she never knew him by that wuk fo' 25 cent a day," she said.

A visitor approached as she sat alone in stocking feet and long dress on the narrow porch of her small unpainted shack.

"I'm looking for Porgy's mother," said the visitor.

She shook her head with a blank look.

"The man all the stories have been written about," the visitor continued. "The one with the goat and cart."

This rang a bell. The old woman smiled and nodded:

"Ah'm his motha," she drawled. "But his name's Sam—Sam Smalls."

Her name is Elvira Gibbs, widow of John Gibbs. Porgy, she says, was among 27 children born to her and the late Samuel Smalls, Elvira's first husband.

Only three of the 27 are still living. The oldest is 67-year-old Lizzie Edeston and her sister of James Island. The other daughter lives at Mayesville, Elvira says.

Elvira never knew of the people who made her son's name famous. Neither did Sam—he was unaware he was called Porgy, she says. Elvira does remember a "Mistah Heywod."

THE HEYWARD

She referred to DuBose Heyward, who wrote the novel, "Porgy" and was coauthor with his wife Dorothy of the play, "Porgy and Bess." The Heywards later collaborated with composer George Gershwin on the Negro folk operetta also entitled "Porgy and Bess."

A motion picture by the same title will have its premiere tomorrow in New York. Elvira

"De white people wuz good to him," she said.

Porgy begged. His only income consisted of coins dropped into a tin cup he carried. He sat on his knees on the quaint cart, which was pulled by a small, smelly goat.

WHO WAS BESS?

Porgy never lived on "Catfish Row," of Charleston's Church Street made famous in the operetta. But he didn't spend all his nights at home. Lizzie believes he had a few girl friends. Neither she nor Elvira ever knew of a girl named "Bess."

He moved back to James Island, Elvira recalls, while still a young man. His spinal condition grew worse and he died. She figures that was about 25 years ago. She never knew what happened to the goat and wagon.

BABY FELL

"He fell when he wuz li'l chile. About five years ole. Had feet but no able to walk. One arm was bad, too. But he had strong body and strong voice."

Lizzie Edeston came onto the porch. She said the family once had a picture of Sam—Porgy—but it had been misplaced for years. Elvira said she wouldn't want to see it: "It'd make me sad."

What did Porgy sing? "Oh, he sung lots o' songs," said Elvira.

Lizzie broke into one of her brother's favorites: "Gimme dat old time religion," she chanted, tapping a ringed finger on her chair and patting a foot in perfect rhythm.

"GOAT SAMMY"

Elvira believes Porgy was about 12 when the family moved from a James Island farm to Charleston. He was never able to work. His childhood was uneventful but he never went to school. He became a familiar sight on the streets of Charleston as a young man. He was known as "Goat Sammy."

"He had dis li'l goat and his wagon, Elvira said. 'He would ride down to town in de mawnin' an' stay till night. An' yo could heah him singin' long way off. His voice was deep."

POVERTY

She spends most of each day on her porch. The scene hardly changes. The area is cluttered and rank with the odor of waste. A mongrel dog, recently the mother of pups, lolls lazily in the yard. An underfed cat scampers across the porch. A chicken caged in a wooden, screened-over box flutters noisily. The roar of trucks and cars from the nearby street is deafening and continuous.

Elvira believes the lot of Negroes has improved economically since her early days. "I use to But we never bought much den. Raised every-ting on de farm."

She thinks people have gotten worse.

"Deh didn't fight 'n kill each other den like deh do now. An' deh didn't drink much."

Why are they worse now?

NO PRAYING

"Cause deh ain' prayin. Deh ain' livin fo de Lawd. Use-be most evah body follow de Lawd. Now only few. Deh serves Him on Sunday 'n do as deh like de otha days."

"Deh don' lissen like deh did. Use-be when you tell 'em to do sump'n deh say, 'yas suh or yas ma'm. 'Now deh say, 'yah and no."

Younger generations have rebelled against old customs, she says.

But she believes white people treat Negroes better now than during her childhood: "Deh use-t' beat 'em a lot. I seen 'em whip. But dat don' happen no mo'."

How does she live now?

She pointed upward: "De Lawd." (She drows an old-age pension, said to be small.)

Has she benefitted at all from the money her son's life has made for others?

"No suh. Ah don' get nothin. But ah sho do need it. Looks like ah could get jus' a li'l bit. Jus' a li'l bit."

Pearl Bailey calls 'Porgy' role her most lasting

NEW YORK — Pearl Bailey has told friends that the role of Maria in Samuel Goldwyn's "Porgy and Bess" is "Just about the most 'lasting' thing that has happened to me."

"I have a feeling," she says, "that whatever else happens it's not going to top this."

That Pearl Bailey's nightclub and TV appearances, and records, may someday be forgotten, but they'll still be thinking of and maybe seeing me in "Porgy and Bess."

who have the title roles.

As the proprietress of the cookshop on Catfish Row, Maria has an endless tenderness for the crippled Porgy and his beloved Bess, a relentless animosity toward that raffish rascal Sportin' Life, played by Sammy Davis Jr.

(Photo By John Nielsen.)
MOTHER OF 'GOAT SAMMY', PORGY'S MODEL
Elvira Gibbs Is Unaware Of Hollywood-Broadway



BOYD MARTIN'S Show Talk

'Raisin In The Sun' Gives True Picture Of Racial Bias With Splendid Humor

Courier-Journal
Characters

Foibles Exposed

Louisville Ky.
In many respects "A Raisin In The Sun," which won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award as the best play of 1958-59, is a very remarkable work.

I saw it recently at the Ethel Barrymore Theater and found it not only extremely interesting but singularly entertaining.

Here is a play written by a Negro woman, directed by a Negro, and played, with one exception, by an all-Negro cast.

What struck me about the play was that author Lorraine Hansberry — while definitely presenting a true picture of racial prejudice—did so with a splendid sense of humor. She exposed the foibles of her characters as if to prove that the Negro can, even in distress, laugh at himself.

Title Taken from Poem

Furthermore, Miss Hansberry has taken her title directly from a poem written by Langston Hughes, Negro poet, playwright, script writer, song writer, who lectured at Memorial Auditorium in February, 1951.

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run? etc.

The dream Miss Hansberry has for her Negro folk is a better life; a life deserved for the sixth generation of her family, descendants of unfortunate captives of the African slave trade.

Part of the dream may come true if the Negro mother of the Younger family, living in a tenement in Chicago, can invest properly the death benefit of a

\$10,000 policy on her husband's life.

She invests about a third of the money in a down payment on a house in a white neighborhood. This is resented by the white community and Mrs. Younger is offered a profit on



SIDNEY POITIER

Stars in prize-winning play

her investment if she and her family will not pursue the contract further.

Another part of the money goes to her daughter to assist her in her medical education. She wants to become a doctor.

Another part is given — after much argument — to her son, Walter Lee, to invest in a liquor store he thinks will make him financially substantial. Walter is swindled out of his part of the money.

But everyone in the family works. The mother is a domestic, as is Walter's wife. Walter is a chauffeur to a rich Chicagoan.

Pooling their income, they believe they can meet further payments on the house the mother has obligated herself to purchase for them.

So, the offer from the white man is refused and the play ends with the family on the move to establish their new homestead.

"A Raisin In The Sun" might have been a nobler play had the Negro family decided not to move into a community where they were not wanted. As the mother leaves the flat—the last one to go—you feel she is a

little too arrogant for one whose conduct in the future should be exemplary.

"A Raisin In The Sun" is magnificently played by the entire cast, but of course those interpreting the Younger family come off with outstanding honors.

Projection Lacking

Among them are the worthy and dominant head of the family, Lana, played by Claudia McNeil, a fine actress; Sidney Poitier, as the son; Ruby Dee as his wife; Glynn Turman as the young son, and Diana Sands as the ambitious daughter.

Poitier struck me as the least articulate performer because of his lack of projection. He seems to have depended too long on a microphone for his voice production in films. This is too bad because Poitier is an extremely sensitive actor. His pantomime, nevertheless, interprets what his reading slurs.



READY FOR BANNER YEAR — Singer-actor-director Harry Belafonte opened what may be his biggest year financially, with a pitch for the March of Dimes fund. Here the high-powered movie, stage and TV artist poses with the polio slogan before embarking on a series of movie, plush night club appearances and business ventures that may gross close to \$3,000,000 in 1959.

Owes Career To Her Children, Lena Horne Says

CHICAGO. — "I never wanted to become a star," Lena Horne reveals in the April issue of Ebony magazine. "I owe my career as an entertainer to my children."



LENA HORNE

In a first-person article called "I'm Proud To Be A Mother," the famous singer-actress says she entered show business because of her children and remained in it largely because of them.

"When my first marriage ended, I was left with the custody of my daughter, Gail," Miss Horne says in Ebony. "My main mission in life was to feed her, clothe her, protect her and provide her with the best education... I stayed in show business because I had to. I simply didn't know how to do anything else..."

Gail, 20, and her brother, Ted, 19, live in New York where they are its only occupants. He can live like a king — without a queen, of course — or court.

Soon Miss Stevens appears on the scene, dodging Belafonte for many months as he works out his problems alone. Afraid to reveal herself to the man, she nevertheless stays close to his shadow, stays close to him, and finally he is led to believe he has committed suicide. Gail, 19, have responded magnificently to Miss Horne's prayers, hopes and dreams. Gail will graduate from Radcliffe in June with a major in French literature. She

intends to do graduate work in French in the fall.

Teddy, who is under the guidance of his father, Louis Jones, during the school year, is a pre-law student at USC. He is a sophomore, working on a seven-year scholarship he won.

"When he finishes his studies, he plans to practice law in California, concentrating on the problems of the various racial minorities on the west coast," says Miss Horne.

Eartha Kitt Storms Out Of Club Again

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Eartha Kitt, who once stormed out of a nightclub circuit again, evidently ruled the day of her return for an engagement at the local Town House in suburban Monroeville.

The management reportedly has declared that after Eartha stormed out of an eight thousand dollar engagement.

Dan and Mike Abriola said there were about 20 patrons in the club at the time when Miss Kitt walked off the stage.

Belafonte Yanks Photog's Camera; Apologizes, Pays

WASHINGTON — Harry Belafonte let a photographer know that he did not want his show disturbed by picture-taking, then proceeded to yank his camera, ruin the film, and later, apologize for it all.

Freelance photographer Al Muto said he had been taking pictures during Belafonte's one-man show at the Carter Barron Amphitheatre from the front of the audience without using his flash. At intermission, Belafonte sent word, inviting Muto to his dressing room.

Muto said when he stepped into the dressing room, Belafonte flew into a rage and complained that the photographer's movements had interrupted the show. Then, Muto said, Belafonte exposed the film, ruining it.

Next, Muto said, Belafonte dropped the camera to the floor and kicked it. Belafonte's manager, Carson Harris, denied that the singer dropped the camera and said the only damage to it was a broken hinge.

The argument ended peacefully, however, when Belafonte later had Harris pay Muto \$250 for the cost of the camera and apologized, inviting Muto to come back at another time and shoot more pictures.



HARRY BELAFONTE

...angers then apologize

Billy's Magic Runs Out



BILLY AND PIERETTE DANIELS

... now she sings for \$1,250 per month

LOS ANGELES — The wife of the third for Daniels. One of his former wives was New England socialite Martha Braun. Billy Daniels, the man whose gyrating crooning made "Old Black Magic" famous, is now singing the blues herself—about their marriage.

● Pierette Daniels, 27, blonde and pretty, has filed for divorce from the sensational singer, charging him with threatening and choking her.

According to Mrs. Daniels' complaint, Billy, who is 44, says the singer's income is \$22,000 a month. She is asking for reasonable support pending the divorce trial.

MRS. DANIELS, a former airlines hostess and one-time nurse for Daniels' children by a previous marriage, said her monthly expenses are \$1,250.

● The Daniels were married in Mexico, Nov. 8, 1955, and separated last Oct. 24. They have two children, Andrea, 2, and Dominique, 7 months.

She also asked for a restraining order to prevent Daniels from molesting or annoying her.

The marriage to Pierette was

Chuck Berry Tells His Side Of Mississippi Gig

Chicago, Ill.—(Special To The Weekly)—Chuck Berry, famed rock and roll idol, who recently escaped a high school mob attack in Meridian, Miss., asserted in an exclusive telephone interview, that he would like to return to Mississippi.

In jive lingo "The Cat must be gone", Berry made the statement in a recent interview with the Chicago Defender.

Berry had to leave Meridian via airplane, after three patrol cars escorted him to the airport, because false rumors had engulfed the town, that he had tried to date a young white girl, while performing at a high school fraternity dance.

Berry at Portsmouth, Va., when asked by the Defender, if he expected to return to Mississippi, stated:

"Sure, man, I've got nothing against Mississippi."

He continued, "Why during the intermission, Fred Ross, who promoted the dance, and

his wife (both white) took me to a swanky house where I was the guest of honor at a reception."

He added, "I don't know why those kids wanted to frame me like that."

Berry denied that he had attempted to date the white girl.

"Man, you know I wouldn't do anything like that in Mississippi," the 28 year old star said.

"The girl, according to the singer, asked me for my autograph and I gave it to her and that's all there was to it."

Reports flooded Meridian that Ross, had promised to get Berry a white date in exchange for an extra hour's performance at the dance.

Berry asserted that he had been requested to sing an extra hour, but they got angry when he told him, he would if they paid me some extra money."

Later Ross brought this girl back to my dressing room and told me, she wanted my autograph. I gave it to her and went back to the bandstand to close the show because it was almost midnight."

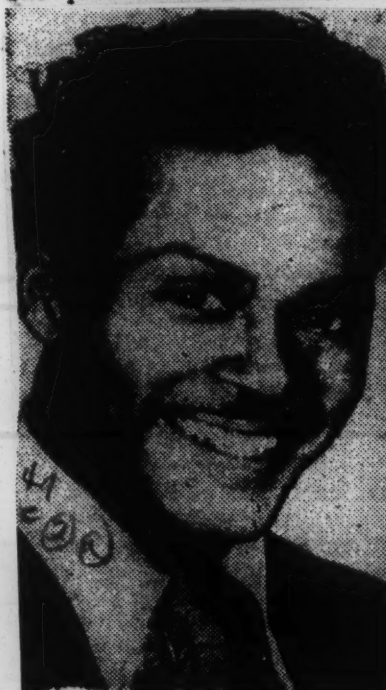
Berry was singing "Memphis, Tennessee" when somebody pulled the plug out of the outlet and told the crowd, "You cats better go home now."

Then some one, who said he was the girl's brother, asked if I had asked his sister for a date. I told him no, I wouldn't do a thing like that."

Later, a crowd of about 30 fellows cornered Berry, but the girl's brother told the crowd that everything was alright, that he had talked to Berry.

A white youth then took Berry out a side door, where he hid until the boy who aided him, returned with the police.

After being held for 14 hours,



CHARLES "CHUCK" BERRY



49c 20
REHEARSALS start today
for Ethel Waters. Her pro-
gram of songs and sketches,
"An Evening With Ethel
Waters" will be seen from
April 10 to May 4 at the
Renaissance Ballroom, 123
West 42nd Street.

EARTHA KITT IS SOLOIST

June 1, 1959
Makes Stadium Debut in Wide
Variety of 'Pop' Selections

Saturday evening's program
at Lewisohn Stadium was of a
"pop" variety and featured the
Stadium debut of Eartha Kitt.
This young woman with the
throaty low voice sang a mis-
cellany that ranged from songs
in Hebrew through spirituals,
blues and selections from Broad-
way.

7-13-59
Maurice Levine conducted the
Stadium Symphony, and his
share of the program, aside
from accompanying Miss Kitt,
consisted of Leonard Bernstein's
"Candide" Overture, four ex-
cerpts from Aaron Copland's
"Rodeo" and Morton Gould's
Latin-American Symphonette.

Miss Kitt, a brilliant enter-
tainer and a thorough artist,
went through her material with
finesse. Something less could
be said of the rather tasteless
orchestral arrangements that
backed her up. They were slick
and tended toward vulgarity. It
is a tribute to Miss Kitt that
her strong personality soared
far above the backgrounds.

An audience of 10,000 persons
attended.

H. C. S.



FLARE-UP IN DIXIE—An angry Joanne Woodward is restrained by Yul Brynner, as
Ethel Waters watches, in "The Sound and the Fury." Friday at the Paramount.



"MUSIC FOR A SUMMER NIGHT"—Jean Leon Destine's Haitian dance group is among the attractions in a

series of programs that will begin over the A. B. C. television network on Wednesday evening from 7:30 to 8:30.

Boston Night Club Blames Eartha Kitt

BOSTON—Blinstrub's, the Boston night club, which Eartha Kitt quit in the middle of an engagement, is threatening to sue the sultry singer for damages.

First, though, the management has filed a complaint with AGVA about her actions and is awaiting its verdict as to whether Miss Kitt will be suspended or not.

The dispute started when Eartha and owner Stanley Blinstrub disagreed over the length of the singer's second shows. When the argument was concluded, Miss Kitt canceled that night's performances and the next night's.

The nitery then posted a sign saying "Due to difficulties beyond

our control, Miss Eartha Kitt has taken upon herself to cancel her engagement and will not be heard tonight." The Mariners were hired for the week-end appearances.

Kitt under fire for Hub pull-out

BOSTON, Mass.—Eartha Kitt was threatened with double-barrelled legal action this week following a row between the entertainer and the management of a local nitery, which resulted in Miss Kitt's cancellation of her engagement.

Blinstrub's, the largest cafe club in the city, indicated that it will sue Miss Kitt in the courts as well as press for punishment of her by the American Guild of Variety Artists.

Eartha was contracted to appear at the club from February 23 to March 1. After doing shows through February 27, she pulled out of the last two dates which were the lucrative Saturday and Sunday shows.

THE REPORT is that the management complained to Eartha about the practice of cutting her second show. A hassle developed and the singer-dancer-actress stormed out in a huff.

On Saturday, the club erected a sign which read: "Due to difficulties beyond our control, Miss Eartha Kitt has taken upon herself to cancel her engagement and will not be heard tonight."

The club filled in the feature spot for the Saturday and Sunday shows with the Mariners as the substitute act.

IN HER five days, Miss Kitt opened her act with "I Want To Be Evil," she segued to "Ain't Misbehavin'" and began to fling off red ribbons of silk to a skin-tight gown.

She sang "I'd Rather Be Burned," "Santa Baby," "Love Is a Gamble," "Let's Begin," and "Old Fashioned Girl."

AS SHE sang "Little White Lies" and with the lights dimmed, she unzipped her gown and stepped out of it, so she could shimmy dance a little and bump and grind some in long white strings of beads, to big mitting.

The "Shimmy" song segued

into some Turkish bits and "C'est Si Bon."



EARTHA KITT

Billy Daniels, 'Long Run Champ' Of 1958 Still The 'Black Magic'

LAS VEGAS Billy Daniels, who features the song "The Black Magic" is just that with the patrons of the "Stardust," a hotel here in this famed gaming city.

In fact Billy might well be called "long run champ" based on

his six months stay at the Stardust. Few artists can boast such a lengthy stay at any hotel here or anywhere else. Even Guy Lombardo, a perennial at New York's hotel Roosevelt, set his mark by repeat engagements. Billy, on the other hand moved into the Stardust six months ago. He is still the star headliner as this is written.

Daniels and his accompanist, Benny Payne have done other things during the Stardust date. They committed for work in a trio of films. "Night Of The Quarter Moon," "Beat Generation" and "The Big Operator." They also recorded several tunes, one, "Billy Daniels At the Stardust" an lp. for MGM records has already hit the "parade" stem with top ratings.

In addition Billy is seen on television, a Los Angeles local over station KTLA that is well received. In fact the program has attracted attention of chain "brass" and there is a chance a taped variety may be seen over the nation during the summer when many of the current chain shows are off the air. Informants say only lack of sufficient sponsorship stands between the programs' handlers and the chain showing interest.

Billy will not be wanting for locations this season. He is already assured of several weeks of performing in Miami. In addition there are two Hollywood strip locations open for "Mr. Black Magic," the guy who features the number and is just that at the reservations tables.

Jamaica stars in hot feud

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ANP) — A smoldering fire broke into the open this week when Lena Horne and Ricardo Montalban, stars of the musical "Jamaica" took their grievances before Actor's Equity.

The issue at stake was whether Montalban could legally take a vacation from the musical until February 9.

EQUITY declared Ricardo could do it; Lena was not happy with the decision which could affect attendance at the musical.

Ralph Harris, Lena's manager, told reporters, "Ricardo's action is unprofessional showmanship. Lena and Ricardo are talking — they have to talk — but the enchantment isn't there as it was."

MONTALBAN argues that he was only out of the show four days when his father died, a week when he had pneumonia and a couple of performances when he did a Ginger Rogers TV pilot film — with permission of producer David Merrick.

Lena's manager pictures Montalban as being anxious to hobnob with his sister-in-law, Loretta Young, while flirting with Hollywood offers.

But Montalban insists he's only eager to go to Los Angeles to see his wife and four children, whom he last saw in August.

Billy Daniels Gets Permit To Sing Again in Cabarets

By Judith Crist

Both the Police Department license bureau and the State Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control have approved the grant of a "temporary and probationary" cabaret performer's license for Billy Daniels, night-club singer barred from bistro work here since his involvement in a bottle-club shooting three years ago.

Mr. Daniels, who rose to fame as the singer of "The Old Black Magic" was arrested on charges of felonious assault and violation of the Sullivan law on Jan. 31, 1956, after a boxing trainer was wounded in a Harlem bottle club.

After almost two years of litigation and appeals, during which the singer filled night-club engagements in other parts of the country and abroad, Mr. Daniels pleaded guilty to illegal possession of a gun on Dec. 5, 1957, he was fined \$200 and received a suspended four-month penitentiary sentence.

License Was Revoked

His cabaret license was revoked and at the time Deputy Police Commissioner James McElroy, in charge of the department's license bureau, was reported to have said that "Daniels will never work in a New York cabaret."

Commissioner McElroy said yesterday the quotation was incomplete and that he had said Mr. Daniels would not work here "without a license." He said no entertainer could be automatically barred from re-applying for a license, that "a person has a right to re-apply," and that each case is judged on its own merits.

Mr. Daniels, he said, re-applied and after a hearing in January the bureau agreed to grant him a "temporary and probationary" identity card, or license, provided that he got the approval of the State Liquor Authority, as required by law for persons convicted of felonies or misdemeanors.

Has 3-Week Engagement

Deputy S. L. A. Commissioner William E. Phillips said yesterday that A. B. C. board granted

Mr. Daniels "temporary" permission to return to mabaret work here and that its decision was governed "in large measure" by the Police Department approval, and "the fact that it was temporary." The A. B. C. permit, granted Feb. 5, is for ninety days.

Mr. Daniels, who is out of town, has not yet presented the A. B. C. permit to the license bureau to pick up his identity card there. He is expected to do so, however, in time for his three-week engagement starting April 16 at the Copacabana.

Las Vegas Arrest Stalls License for Billy Daniels

The Police Department backed yesterday on its assurances that an entertainer's license was ready and waiting for singer Billy Daniels. It announced that before granting the license it had decided to investigate his arrest on a drunkenness charge in Las Vegas last October.

On Thursday, Deputy Commissioner James McElroy, in charge of the cabaret license bureau, said he did not know whether the singer's arrest was part of the record of a January hearing held on the Dan-iel's application for the restoration of his license. It had been revoked three years ago after a Jan. 31, 1956, shooting in a Harlem bottle club. The singer subsequently pleaded guilty to illegal possession of a gun, a misdemeanor, and was fined \$200 and given a suspended four-month prison sentence.

In January, the bureau approved granting of a "temporary and probationary" license, provided that the State Liquor Authority gave its approval, as required by law for persons convicted of felonies or misdemeanors. The S. L. A. gave its approval last Feb. 3 and the police identity card was ready and waiting for Mr. Daniels to pick up. He is out of town, but is scheduled for a three-week engagement at the Copacabana beginning April 16.

Published reports yesterday that Mr. Daniels had been arrested on the drunk charge in Las Vegas last Oct. 16, however, prompted Commissioner McElroy to announce yesterday that issuance of a temporary identity card to Mr. Daniels "is withheld until an investigation is made into the circumstances surrounding his reported arrest in Las Vegas on Oct. 16, 1958, the disposition of the case and his failure to reveal this incident at his recent hearing in the cabaret bureau. If the singer does not attempt to pick up his license, a department spokesman said, no investigation will be made. An identity card is required of any entertainer fulfilling an engagement of more than three days in this city.

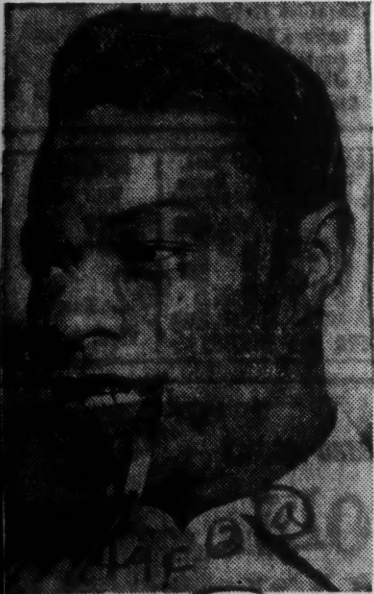
Singer to Do Benefit in Caracas

Nat Cole to Be Fine Envoy Of Good Will to Latins

By LOUELLA O. PARSONS
HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Nat
King Cole will make a fine
good will ambassador to the
Latin American countries when
he leaves late in March on his
first concert tour of South
America. He has a host of fans
there who buy his records.

One of the highlights of his
tour will be a benefit show in
Caracas, put on with the joint
blessing of our State Depart-
ment and the Venezuelan gov-
ernment.

In anticipation of the tour
both Nat and Maria are brush-
ing up on their Spanish. Nat's
"Cole Espanol" album is in



Nat Cole
... good will envoy